ANIMAG

THE MAGAZINE OF JAPANESE ANIMATION

5

CHAR'S COUNTERATTACK

VENUS WARS

CITY HUNTER

FIRST ANIVERSARY ISSUE

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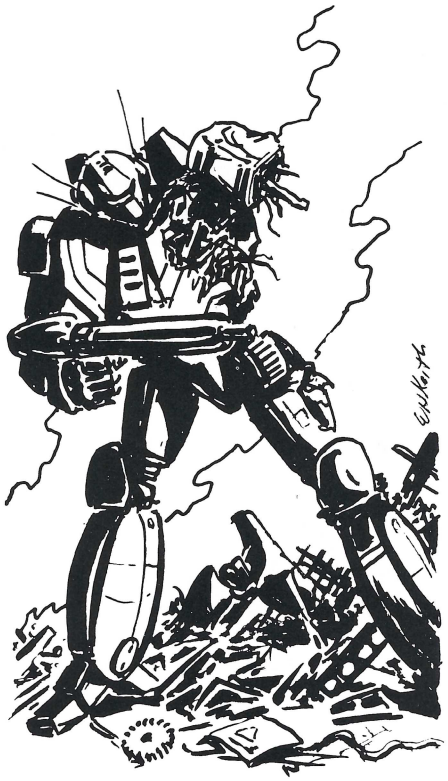

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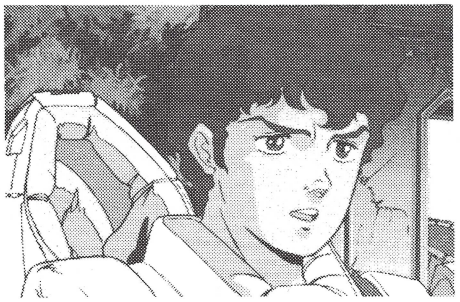

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

In 1979 animation writer Yoshiyuki Tomino created the TV series *Mobile Suit Gundam*, a show that works to blur the traditional conflict between good and evil. The main characters in *Gundam* are people, pitted not against monsters from outer space but against other people. The *Gundam* world features complex characters with both good and bad traits; heroes as well as enemies die.

Tomino has made*Gundam* an institution. In the Japanese tradition, the shows are accompanied by feature films, comics, novels, records, toys, stationary, and books lavishly detailing the mecha inside the various robots. No other single story line has had more models produced than *Gundam*--and not including offshoots such as "Super-Deformed" models, *Gundam* boasts over 200 standard model kits.

The next installment in the *Zeta Gundam* saga continues in this issue with Episodes #25-30, in which the Titans return to Gripps because of their failure in Operation Apollo; Jerid, Maure and Sara transfer from *Dogoth-Gear* to *Alexandria*; Reccoa infiltrates *Jupitoris*; the Titans attempt to use the deadly G-3 poison gas on the colonies on Side 2; and *Ahgama* is attacked by Titans forces.

Char's Counterattack, our feature article, brings to a climax the story that began in the original *Mobile Suit Gundam*--the clash of wills between Char Aznable and Amuro Rey.

"Robot Icons of the Popular Culture" is an excerpt from Frederik L. Schodt's new book, *Inside the Robot Kingdom: Japan, Mechatronics, and the Coming Robotopia*. In the excerpt, Frederik Schodt examines the stories and characters that have emerged from post-war comics and animation, and their cultural influence.

If you'd like a chance of pace from robots in general, take a look at ***City Hunter***, an action/comedy/adventure/detective show featuring the irrepressible Ryo Saeba, gun-for-hire and *sukebe* at large.

Although ***Project A-ko*** features a few classic mecha such as the Arashiyama V and the Spider Machine Max 5000, the "greatest military weapon ever created by science," *Project A-ko* is not your average robot combat show. Join the athletic A-ko during an average school day at the Graviton Institute for Girls. Spend your lunch period with C-ko and her gourmet lunches. Hang out with B-ko and catch up on the latest gossip. If you're a student or have ever been one, you're sure to enjoy A-ko's outrageous antics.

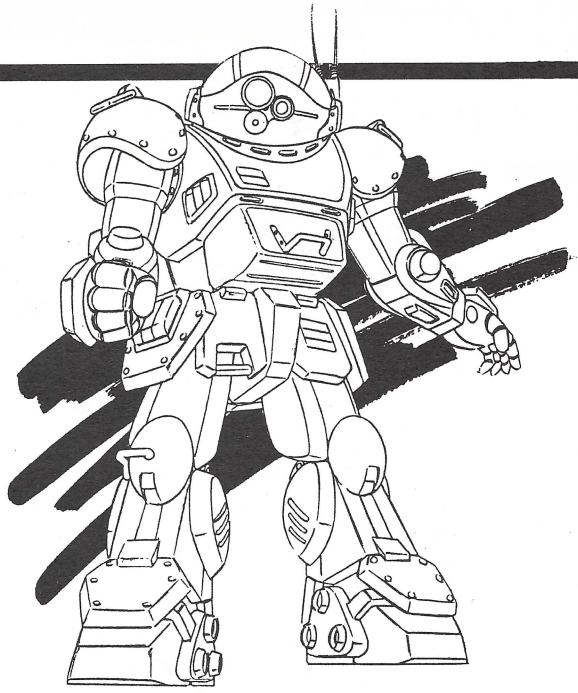
In our regular features department, the Psychommu system is the focus of James Teal's **Mecha File**, and **Anime Ja Nai** gives the top ten lists for favorite male, female and mecha characters. As a special bonus, we've included a full-color poster of Yoshikazu Yasuhiko's ***Venus Wars*** and a guidebook to Masamune Shirow's ***Appleseed***.

In July of 1986, a group of animation fans got together and imagined a magazine that would cover their hobby the way they wanted to see it done. A year later, the first issue of *Animag* hit the stands. We're proud to present this, our anniversary issue, to you. Here's to another year.

Trish Ledoux
Editor

ANIMATION UPDATE

ARMOR HUNTER
MELLOWLINK

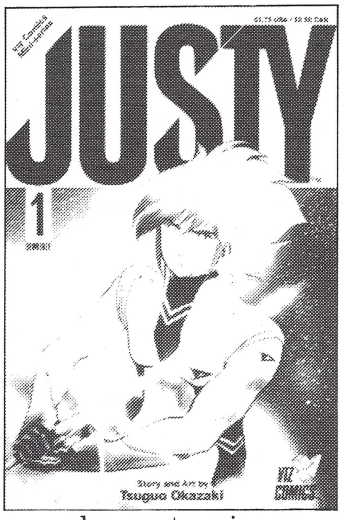


Armor Hunter Mellowlink is the first 50-minute part in a six-volume OAV series of the same name to be released on October 21, 1988 from VAP Video. *Mellowlink* takes place in the *Armored Trooper Votoms* universe, but is an original story. Neither Chrico nor Red Shoulders will appear in this companion piece. The story will be told in 12 stages, with two episodes per tape.

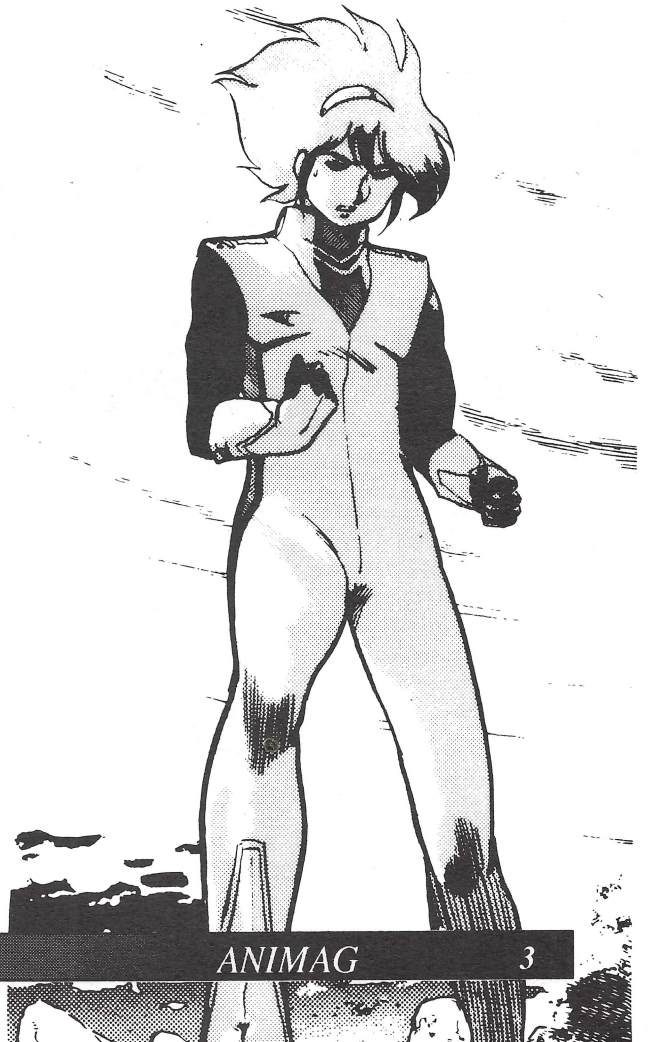
The main character of the story is Mellowlink, a seventeen-year-old male. He was once an Armored Trooper (AT) pilot, but because of a conspiracy, he is demoted to an Armor Hunter (troops who hunt down ATs). As if that were not enough, his squadron is sent into a trap. Mellowlink is the only survivor. The unfortunate matter of his survival is punished by Mellowlink being branded as a traitor and war deserter who has also stolen military funds. Not only for himself but for his fallen comrades, Mellowlink begins a journey of revenge against the forces that betrayed him.

Armored Trooper Votoms centers around AT versus AT combat. *Armor Hunter Mellowlink* will focus on man versus AT. The first episode in the series is titled "Stage 1: Wilderness."

JUSTY™



Beginning in December, Viz Comics will begin publication of nine-issue, biweekly installments of Tsuguo Okazaki's *Cosmo Police Justy*. *Justy* is the story of a powerful esper (a person with ESP abilities) who uses his enormous psychic power to pursue and execute criminal espers, space pirates, mad scientists and others who threaten universal peace. The mini-series will not, however, reprint the entire series, nor will it begin with the first volume of the original *Justy*. *Justy* #1 will focus on the "Tears of Astalis Adventure," which was also animated in a short 35-minute animation video. The story revolves around a powerful esper named Astralis, the daughter of an esper criminal killed by Justy. Astralis, yet a child, uses her power to accelerate her growth toward womanhood so she can kill Justy and thus avenge her father's murder. *Justy* #1 will ship in December. Subsequent issues, priced at $1.75, will contain 32 black-and-white pages.



Demon City

Shinjuku

Demon City Shinjuku is brought to you by the staff of *Monster City*. Although the plethora of bizarre monsters and demons may make the film seem like a sequel to *Monster City*, it's not. *Demon City* is a whole new story with a similar theme.

The main character is a male high school student named Kyoya Izayoi. The heroine is a pure and innocent girl, Sayaka Lama. Together the two must fight demons and evil priests to save mankind.

Ten years ago, Kyoya's father, Genichiro, studied a great power under the guidance of the head priest, Lai. In addition to Genichiro was another student, Lebbie Lar, who also desired to master the secrets of *Nen*, the ability to become one with the powers of the universe.

Lar, jealous of Genichiro's superior ability in *Nen*, made a pact with the powers of darkness and defeated Genichiro, also destroying most of Shinjuku, which becomes a demon-infested, lawless place known as Demon City. The pact is this: in exchange for Lar's new powers, he agrees to open a gateway for the remainder of the demons to come to the surface world in ten year's time.

Ten years later the first incident occurs. Sayaka's father, a top-ranking government official, is attacked. The goal behind the attack is the distraction of Head Priest Lai, forcing his constant supervision of Sayaka's father.

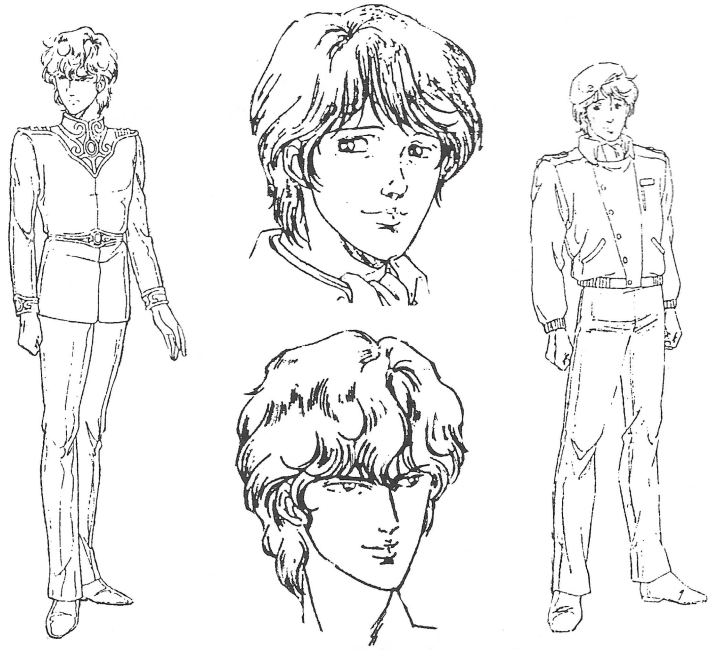
Enter Kyoya, possessor of the power passed down from his father, heedless of Lai and Sayaka's pleas to fight Lar. It's not until Sayaka sets out for Demon City on her own that Kyoya follows and the battle begins. Armed with only a *bokuto* (wooden sword) and undeveloped skill, Kyoya battles many demons and improves his talent with each encounter.

The Day of Summoning is only three days away. Can Kyoya defeat an enemy his father could not?

Even with talent, Kyoya is unable to match the powers of darkness and is defeated the first time he battles Lar. Kyoya is vanished into the abyss.

On the day of the great summoning, Lar gloats over his victory and in the abyss, Kyoya finds his father's *bokuto*....

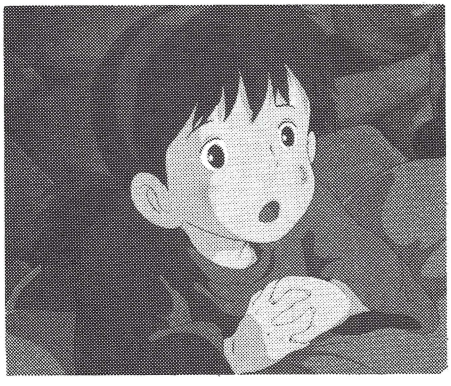
LEGEND OF THE GALACTIC HEROES



This December Kitty Enterprises will release the first 30-minute volume in a twenty-six volume video series. One volume is to be released each week thereafter and is limited to mail order. Each volume will cost ¥2,500 and will be mailed each week beginning December 21, 1988. The story begins one year after the movie of the same title. After a humiliating defeat by the Galactic Empire's young admiral, Rheinhart von Lohengram, the Free Planets promote Yan Wenli to admiral and give him his own fleet. His first mission seems impossible--steal the Iserlohn Fortress from the Empire. Yan succeeds, but Rheinhart sends a spy to start a coup d'état in the Free Planets' capital, planet Heinesen. Yan surpresses the coup at the price of abandoning plans of making an offense against the Empire. Meanwhile, Rheinhart surpresses the civil war in the Empire, a revolt against him by the aristocracy. He wins the war and becomes Premier of the Empire.

ENGLISH VERSION OF LAPUTA

Tokuma Shoten of Japan has announced plans to distribute an English-language version of Hayao Kiyazaki's animated classic, *Laputa*. The company recently opened an American office in Los Angeles, and is negotiating with several agencies for American distribution rights. The English version of *Laputa* was originally produced for Hong Kong release, where it grossed more money than any other animated film in Hong Kong's history. Tokuma Shoten is hoping to have similar success in the U.S. and looks toward bringing other films to the U.S. in the future.



NEW ANIMATION

FILMS

• ***Five Star Stories***
Mamoru Nagano's science fiction fantasy. Double-billed with *Utsuno Miko*. Voice actors of note are Ryo Horikawa (Ladios Sopp) and Maria Kawamura (Fatima Lachesis); 60 minutes. Release date: 5/89.

• ***Utsuno Miko***
Fantasy set in Ancient Japan; 85 minutes. Release date: 5/89.

• ***Kimagure Orange Road***
Resolution of the Kyosuke/Madoka/Hikaru love triangle. Release date: 10/1/88 for Tokyo/Yokohama, 10/8/88 elsewhere.

• ***Venus Wars***
Yoshikazu Yasuhiko's science fiction story set on Venus in 2089 A.D.; 100 minutes. Kugatsusha. Release date: Spring, 1989.

• ***It's Raining Fire***
Grass roots anti-war movie set during WWII. Mushi Productions.

• ***Zhigoma the Thief***
Retouched release of a film that was popular at the 1987 Hiroshima International Animation Festival.

ORIGINAL ANIMATION VIDEOS

• ***Gospel of One Pound***
A young boxer called Hatanaka falls in love with Angela, a young nun. Original video based on comics by Rumiko Takahashi (*Urusei Yatsura*). Produced by Studio Gallop and distributed by Victor Music Industries. Release date: 12/2/88.

• ***Armor Hunter Mellowlink***
Armored Trooper Votoms companion story; 50 minutes. VAP video. Release date: 10/21/88.

• ***Crying Freeman***
Based on comic of the same name, written/drawn by people who brought you *Mai the Psychic Girl*. Toei Video. Release date: 11/25/88.

• **Video Animation Series from Tokuma Japan**
Tokuma Japan plans to release animated comics each month starting with ***Taiman Blues 2***; 30 minutes. Release date: 11/89. The lineup includes ***Golden Dragon*** (12/88), ***Miroku*** (1/89), and ***Kasei Yakyoku*** (2/89). Each volume will be 30-minutes long.

• ***Salamander Basic Saga: An Opera of Meditation***
Sequel to the first *Salamander* OAV, based on the video game of the same title. Konami Industries. Release date: 11/11/88.

• ***Demon City Shinjuku***
Based on fantasy/horror novel by Hideyuki Kikuchi (*Monster City*); 80 minutes. Japan Home Video. Release date: 10/25/88.

• ***Dragon Century***
Story taken from the comic book *Dragon Breeder*. Two-volume series. Hiroyuki Kitazume is character designer and animation director; 30 minutes. Kuboshoten/AIC. Release date: 10/26/88.

• ***Leina II***
Second *Machine-Robo* OAV; 30 minutes. Toshiba EMI. On sale now.

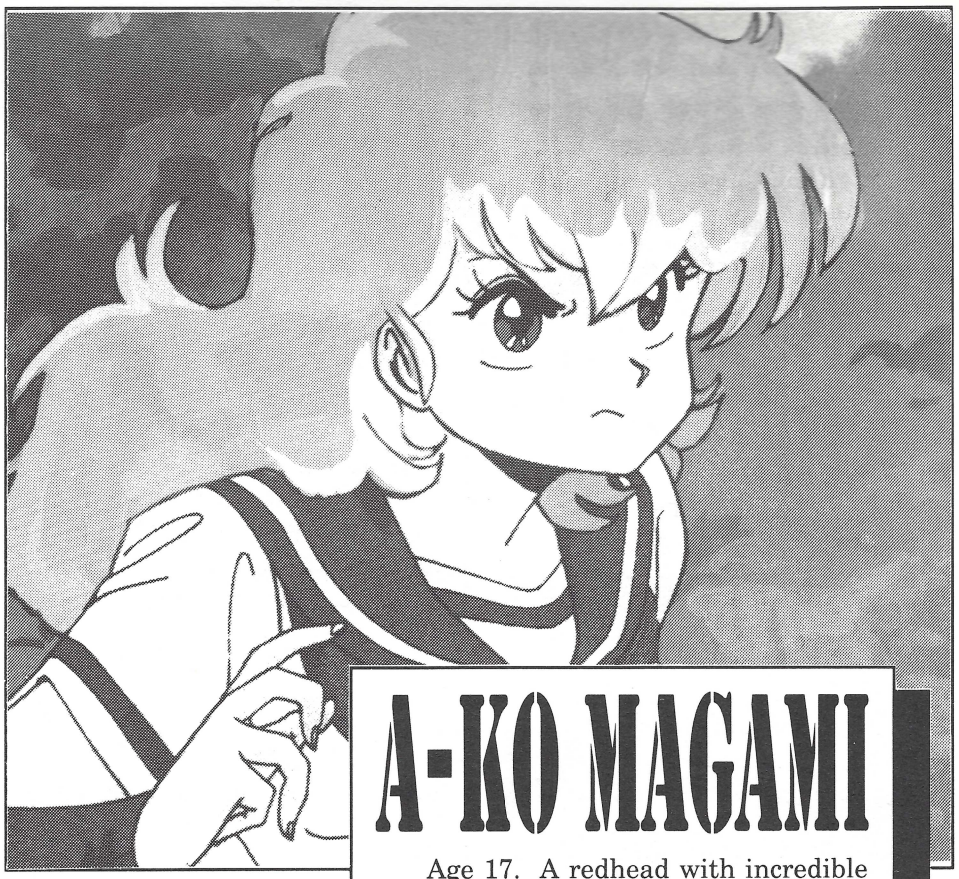
• ***Vampire Miyu*, Volume Two**
Continuation of the girl vampire story by Toshihiro Hirano (*Fight! Iczer-1*) begun in the first volume of *Vampire Miyu*; 30 minutes. Soeishinsha/Pony Cannon. Release date: 10/21/88. Volumes three and four will be released on the twenty-first of December and February, respectively.

• ***Bubblegum Crisis 5: Moonlight Rambler***
Continuing battles against the sinister Genom Corporation. Toshiba EMI. Release date: 2/25/88.

• ***Earthian***
Original comic by Yun Takakawa. Character designer and animation director is Kenichi Onuki (*Tokyo Vice*). Toshiba EMI. Release date: Spring, 1989.

• ***Barefoot Gen 2***
Sequel to the anti-nuclear weapons movie, ***Barefoot Gen***. [Excerpts from the *Barefoot Gen* comics have been released in English as *I Saw It*.]

PROJECT A-KO



A-KO MAGAMI

Age 17. A redhead with incredible abilities and a knack for getting into trouble--lots of it. She usually wears a sailor suit schoolgirl uniform. Although the armbands she always wears seem to be the source of her unusual powers, they are actually a restraint upon them.

Article By
Bryan C. Wilkinson

Project A-KO Video
Producer: Kazufumi Nomura
Director: Katahiko Nishijima
Character Design/Animation Director: Yuji Moriyama

IN THE BEST TRADITION

Is it possible to take the outrageous silliness of classic American cartoons (such as *Tom and Jerry*) and blend it with the "realism" of anime characters? The producers of *Project A-ko* seem to think so. As an all-out satire on anime, nothing is held sacred: the film parodies everything from anime stereotypes (such as the all-too-common sailor suit schoolgirl uniforms and giant, sometimes transforming, robots) to story lines, artistic styles, and even film titles; *Project A* is the name of a famous Jackie Chan martial arts film. *Project A-ko* is loaded with cameo appearances, double meanings, and outright slapstick comedy.

The staff behind *Project A-ko* are by no means new to animation. Character Designer/Animation Director Yuji Moriyama was also the Animation Director for *Wings of Oneamis*, and the second and third *Urusei Yatsura* films. Moriyama also designed the characters for Rumiko Takahashi's *Maison Ikkoku* series. The soundtrack of the first *A-ko* film is unique in itself, produced in Hollywood by Joey Carbone (the music director for *Star Search*) and Richie Zito (*Flashdance*). The voice casting includes renowned voice actress Michie Tomizawa (Doris from *Vampire Hunter "D"*) as C-ko, and Shuichi

Ikeda (Char Aznable from *Gundam*) as the Captain.

The film was released in Japanese theatres in mid-1986. Almost a year later, in May of 1987, a sequel was released as an OAV (original animation video). While many felt it was not up to quality of the original, the sequel established outrageous happenings as common routine in A-ko's world, and was well received by the public. A third film, *Cinderella Rhapsody*, was released as an OAV in mid-June, 1988.

THE SETTING

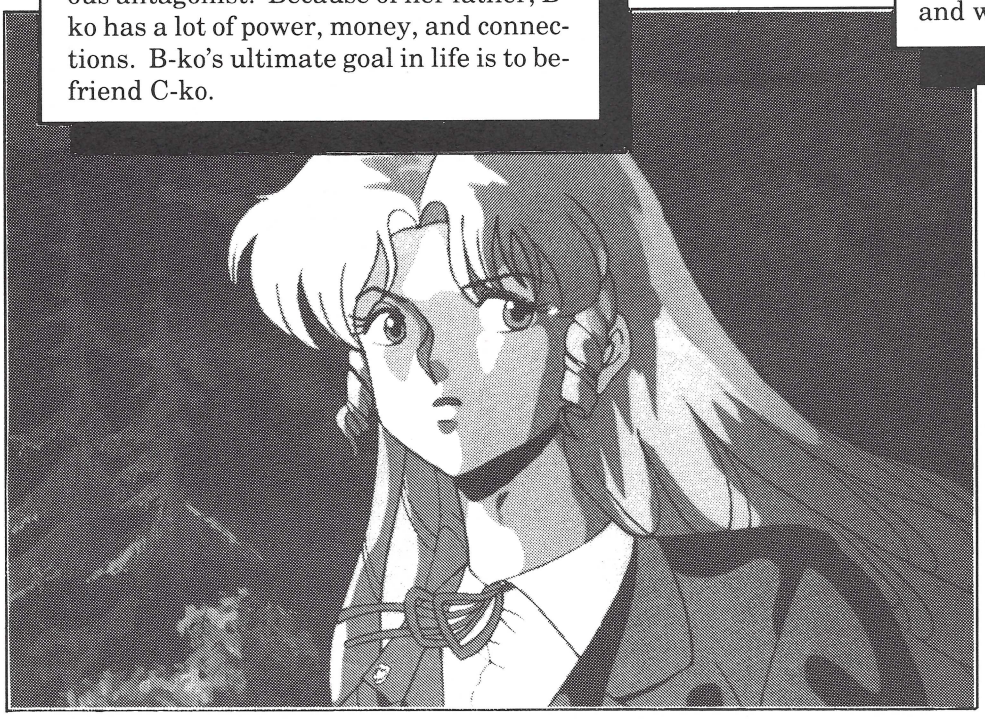
Sometime in our near future, a strange alien craft crash-lands on Earth in the middle of Graviton City, destroying everything within a 50-kilometer radius and killing six million people [a scene which parodies the openings of other "post-holocaust" anime. Nothing in the *A-ko* world should be taken *too* seriously]. Sixteen years later we witness mankind's first interstellar space probe-- the *Constellation* -- being launched from the great Space Station L-III, a military base that goes into orbit as a safeguard against further alien invasion. The original alien craft is found to be no more than an empty, derelict artifact of an advanced alien civilization. Graviton City has been rebuilt around the bay which has since filled the crater, with its downtown/business sector located on a small island surrounding the huge artifact. The artifact itself has been built into a military command center and dominates the rest of the city, a constant reminder to its inhabitants that they are not alone....

C-KO KOTOBUKI

Age 17. A bubble-brained crybaby, yet ridiculously cute to the point where all others are attracted to her. She is an old school chum of A-ko's and sticks to her as if her life depends on it. Her unceasing babble (often with a literally two-foot-wide mouth) is always in the third person. C-ko has orange-blond hair, always wears a flower in it, and sports the same uniform as A-ko. Her natural talent is indirectly causing large-scale catastrophes, and the ability to create the best-looking and worst-tasting lunches....

B-KO DAITOKUJI

Age 17. A-ko's violet-haired, glamorous antagonist. Because of her father, B-ko has a lot of power, money, and connections. B-ko's ultimate goal in life is to befriend C-ko.



OTHER CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN NAPOLIPOLITA

The alien captain of a super fortress, searching for the "Daughter of the Fifth Queen of the Fourth Lepton Kingdom, Throne of the Swan, of the Star Alpha" (a lost princess).

ARIDAMRO "D" DARIM (SPY D)

A secret alien agent planted on Earth by the Captain. Usually wears a green trenchcoat and dark glasses.

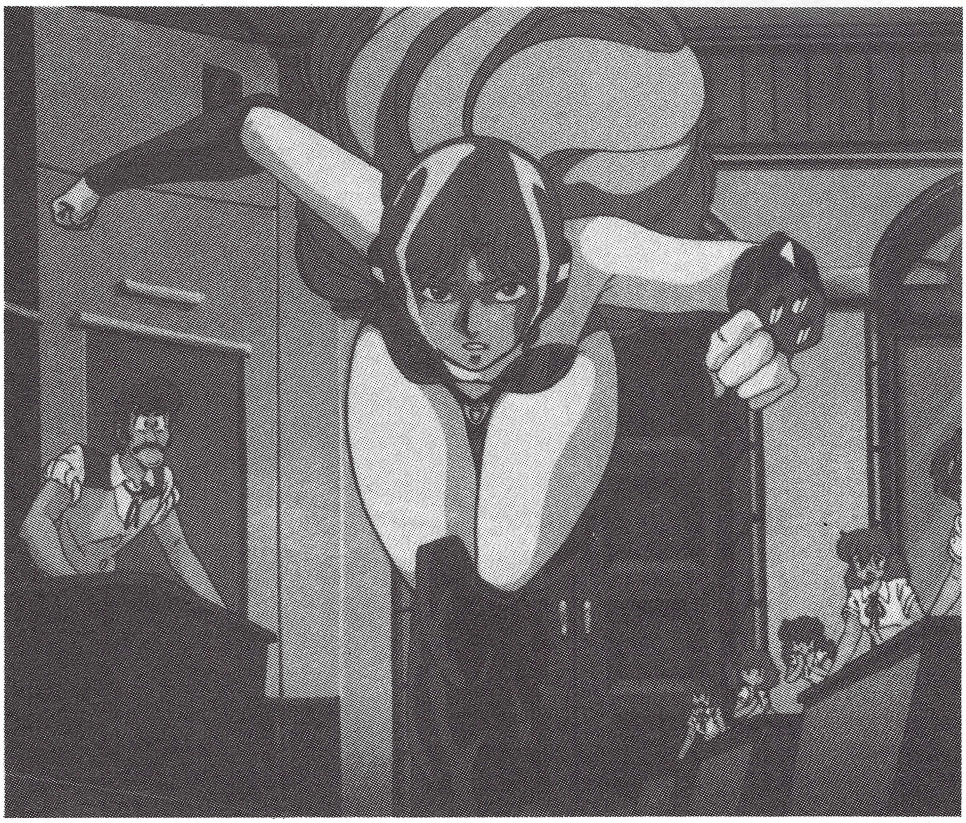
SENSEI (TEACHER) AYUMI

The overly good-looking teacher at Graviton Institute. She has blue-green hair and rides a red motorscooter. She is usually seen teaching an English lesson, reading nonsensical poetry.

B-KO'S MINIONS

ASA has brown hair with a pony tail and is in charge of the other three; **INE** is tall and skinny with short brown hair and buck teeth and does most of the spying for B-ko; **UME** has short dark hair and glasses, is overweight, and usually operates vehicles or mecha; **MARI** is a gigantic, masculine girl in the *Hokuto No Ken* style and does the "grunt work" for the rest.

THE STORY



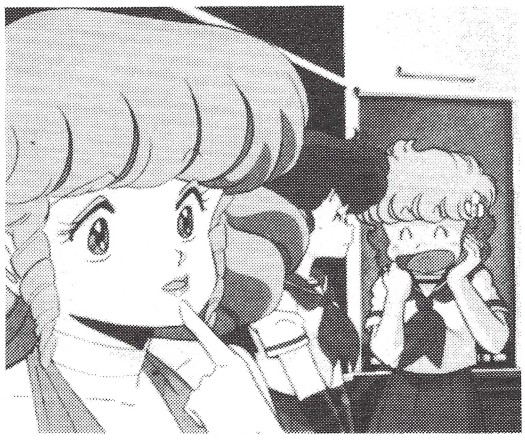
Sixteen years after the destruction of Graviton City, A-ko Magami slowly wakes from a deep sleep. Soon realizing she is late for her first day of school, she struggles to get ready as her friend C-ko arrives. The two rush off to school, chatting about C-ko's decision to flunk school--as A-ko did, in order to stay in the same school--but when A-ko again realizes how late it is, she breaks into a 60 mph run, pulling C-ko along and bounding over and through the neighborhood. A-ko and C-ko meet Spy D on the way. Spy D is bored by having to stay on Earth. A-ko's quick brush against the alien spy sends him through a brick wall.

In spite of their breakneck speed, A-ko and C-ko still arrive late at the Graviton Institute for Girls. The two go to their assigned class, taught by Sensei Ayumi. C-ko introduces herself and attracts the attention of B-ko, who continues watching her through a near-lethal lunch ("Isn't it pretty, A-ko?"). B-ko already sees C-ko as the "perfect friend" and starts scheming to find a way to win her from A-ko.

The two return late to class and in punishment are told to stand in the hall and wear "I was late for class today" signs. A-ko scolds C-ko for causing their predicament. C-ko responds with a crying fit. Sensei Ayumi is enraged by the disruption of her class and assigns A-ko clean-up duty after school for provoking C-ko. While A-ko takes care of this chore, C-ko falls into a trap set by B-ko as the giant Mari tries to attack her. C-ko is completely unaware of the situation and thinks Mari wants to play a version of "rock-scissors-paper," and is eager to participate. Asa, who led C-ko into the trap, tries to stop Mari but meets the fate intended for C-ko. Fortunately, A-ko hears Asa's screams and comes to C-ko's rescue, easily taking care of Mari. B-ko, surprised by her foiled

plans, decides to investigate the "A-ko issue" more carefully.

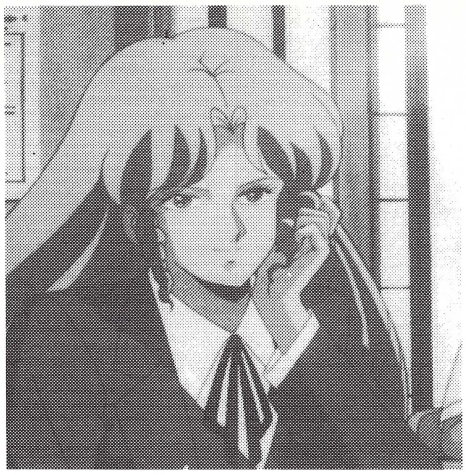
The next morning A-ko oversleeps again. She and C-ko dart off to school as before, running into Spy D for the second time and hurtling him into the air. The girls arrive on time but A-ko isn't safe yet—A-ko wrecked the schoolroom in order to rescue C-ko the day before—and is punished by being sent outside to repair broken school desks. After threatening another lunch, C-ko "convinces" A-ko to see a movie downtown. B-ko sends Ine to spy on them and film their trip while Spy D trails them. After the movie (a parody of *Harmageddon*) the two head home. Suddenly, a steel beam falls from a construction site toward C-ko. A-ko bends the beam in two as the surrounding public observes the superhuman feat ("Oh, it was nothing!" A-ko says, embarrassed by the attention). Ine and Spy D retreat hastily.



B-ko learns of the incident and recalls that even in kindergarten, she had despised A-ko for keeping her from playing with C-ko. She puts "Project A-ko" into action, which is her plot to discredit and humiliate A-ko and win C-ko's affection.

Meanwhile, Spy D contacts Captain Napolipolita of the alien command ship which has accidentally run into and destroyed something (the *Constellation*). Spy D reports that within "eighty percent probability" the lost princess has been found. The Captain is surprised and orders D to make the identification positive.

The following morning the girls are late and steam-roll past Spy D once more. This time, though, B-ko is

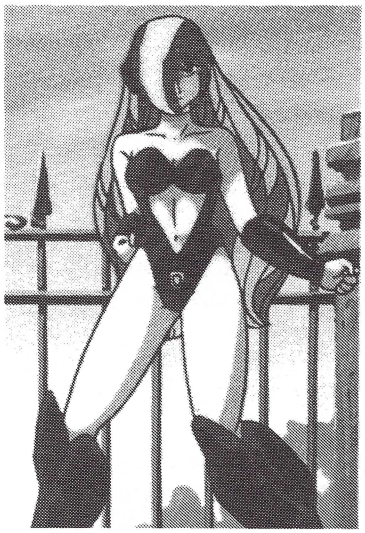


waiting for them. B-ko reminds A-ko of the duel over C-ko back in Cradle Kindergarten. It was never completed, B-ko says, and she wishes to continue it now. The winner will get C-ko. A-ko tells B-ko to take a flying leap, but B-ko insists and sends Ine against her in a powered suit. A-ko doesn't think this is a fair duel and puts the suit out of commission with a single punch.

Undaunted, B-ko continues to scheme, exclaiming, "With this, C-ko will be mine tomorrow!" The next morning, A-ko and C-ko dart off late to school as usual, naturally "bumping" into Spy D, who is now wearing three casts, a neck brace, and several bandages.

B-ko is waiting at the school gate, blocking their entrance. B-ko calls out to a strange-looking car, driven by Ume. The vehicle transforms into the Spider Machine Max 5000. After gloating over the Spider Machine being the "greatest military weapon ever created" (the cockpit is mostly taped-together stereo components), B-ko orders Ume to attack A-ko but to no avail—in transforming, the necessary controls have moved out of Ume's reach and A-ko destroys the robot by kicking its tire-foot. That evening B-ko works on even greater plans to destroy A-ko, more determined than before.

The next morning, A-ko and C-ko run to school earlier in an effort to avoid B-ko. Spy D has finally realized that standing in the middle of the road to Graviton Institute can be hazardous to his health, and instead hides in a small gateway. A-ko, taking a different route this time, crashes through the gate and sends the alien flying once more. The two arrive at school in plenty of time but face an expectant audience; B-ko, not to be outdone, has brought a set of five large dumpy-looking gargantuan robots, the Arashiyama V, to end her duel with A-ko. Having gone through the trouble of getting up early only to face this, A-ko is irate and takes out the five one by one, defying most of the laws of physics in the process. A-ko berates B-ko for making her late for school again. B-ko responds by furiously tearing off her school uniform and revealing a uniform-type black suit armed with a micro-missile launcher. This suit, the Akagiyama 23, gives her abilities comparable to those of A-ko, and with it she finally takes A-ko on personally. The real duel finally begins.



Spy D contacts Captain Napolipolita and confirms that the person in question is indeed the princess, showing her pictures of A-ko and C-ko darting off to school. The Captain immediately heads the ship toward Earth. On Earth, a military commander discusses the real reason for the lost contact with the *Constellation*—the media had been told it was only suffering from a malfunction; actually, it crashed into the aliens' ship. The alien ship arrives and destroys Space Station L-III. The Captain dismisses the resulting attack from L-III as that of a "tribe of savages." The ship descends into the at-

mosphere, finally revealing its full 6.5 kilometer length. The ship dispatches a flotilla of giant spider-like "Kumomecha" to clear its way of any resistance.

A-ko and B-ko, who have been hashing it out away from the school downtown, also encounter the tanks and Kumomecha, which A-ko uses to

help feed the duel. They toss one or two of the enormous machines at each other every now and then. They continue until Spy D kidnaps C-ko, revealing her as the missing princess, and takes her back to the command ship. A-ko and B-ko are forced to form a temporary alliance to recapture C-ko.

Naturally, this does not prove easy. Even with the Akagiyama 23's flight capability, the two ex-foes are separated. B-ko eventually finds C-ko in a palace-like structure [reminiscent of the Urusei Yatsura film, *Only You*] near the center of the behemoth. C-ko is wearing a royal gown and tiara and has cried herself into a state of shock. A-ko, meanwhile, has also managed to get inside the ship only to meet an enraged Spy D who wants revenge upon A-ko. A second duel begins...and D is revealed as a female, as apparently are all of the aliens. A-ko finally gets past D, suffering only a scratched face and a slashed skirt. She stumbles onto the bridge, soon followed by B-ko and C-ko. B-ko calls off the truce and resumes their duel, firing missiles at A-ko. The Captain, who is an alcoholic, begins to tremble violently in the throes of withdrawal. D comes after A-ko with a handgun. The ensuing four-way riot on the bridge results in the triggering of the ship's self-destruct mechanism, and the whole super-fortress falls toward the military base, the artifact from which C-ko came 16 years ago.

The scene switches back to the Graviton Institute, where, to Sensei Ayumi's horror, the ejected bridge of the ship happens to crash-land ("Oh, sorry, teacher...." apologizes A-ko).

The next morning, A-ko awakens and dons her new school uniform. She goes downstairs to meet C-ko, passing her parents on the way. As she and C-ko dart off to school we see the remains of the once-proud, 6.5 km-long alien fortress which is teetering slightly off-balance atop the tiny military base. Spy D and the Captain are seen on the street wearing rags, wearing "Please Contribute to the Homeless" and "Save the Aliens" signs.

At the Graviton Institute, B-ko awaits....

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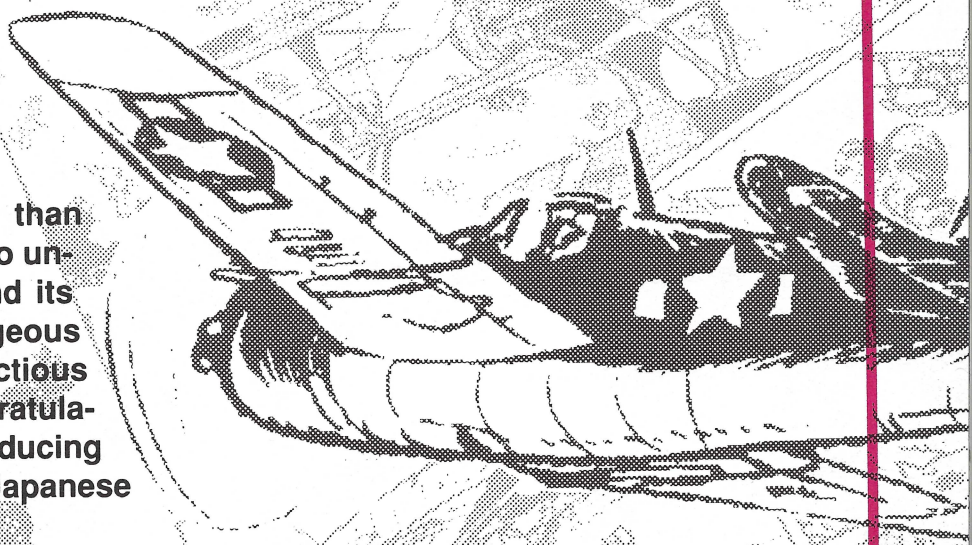

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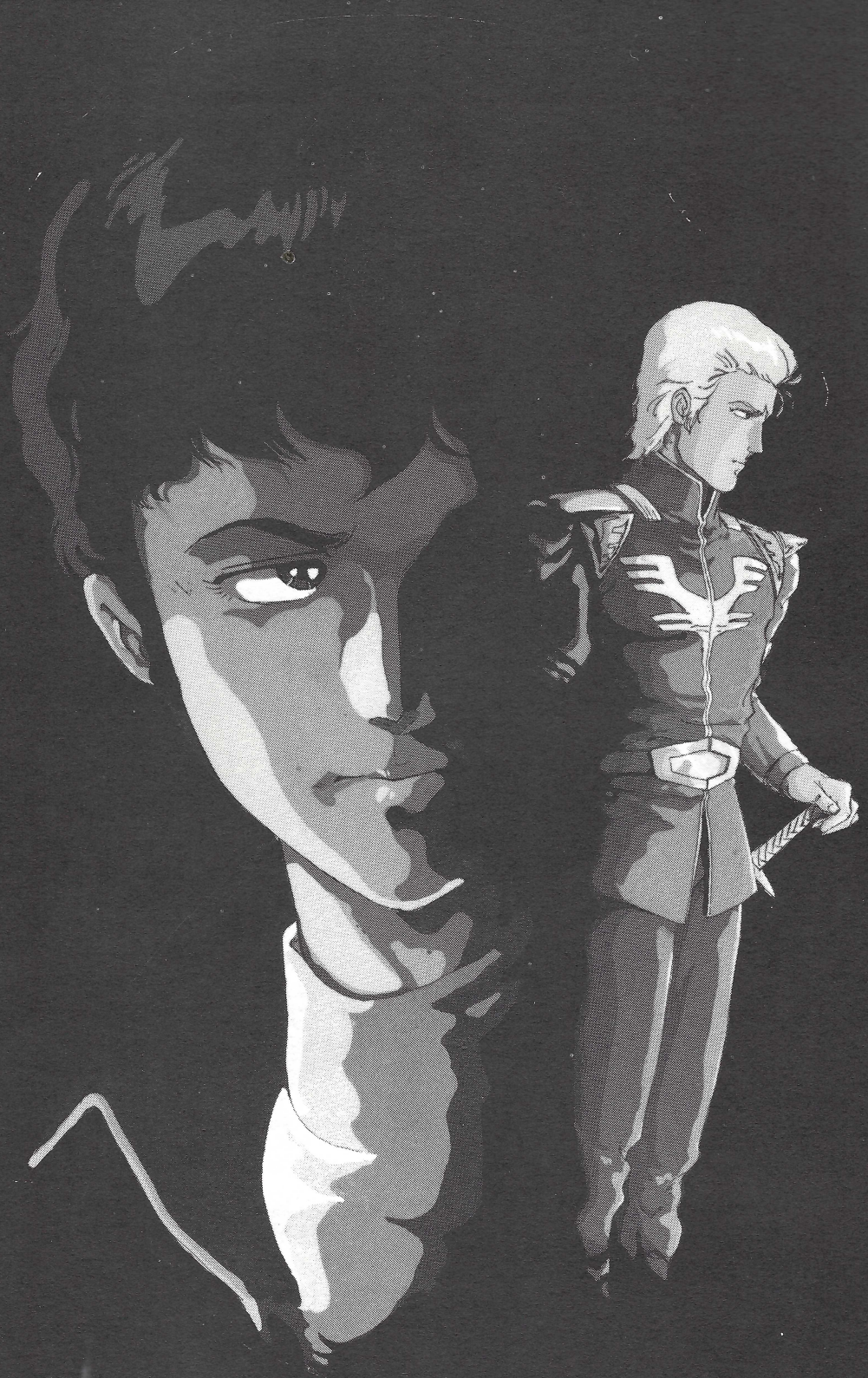


MOBIL
CHAR'S

The Final Resolution of the Clash of Wills Between Char Aznable and Amuro Rey

Article By
James Christiansen
Hisashi Kotobuki
Yumiko Yamamoto

INTRODUCTION

Mobile Suit Gundam, Char's CounterAttack, released this summer by Sunrise, is a landmark film in the company's history. Not only is the film a fine example of Sunrises' state-of-the-art animation, but it is also the apex in the story line of one of the most popular and successful animated series in Japan. The Gundam Saga began in 1979 with the television series Mobile Suit Gundam, and soon after spawned three animated films which retold the television story. After a hiatus of six years, Sunrise revived the show in 1985 with *Zeta Gundam* and followed that in 1986 with *Gundam ZZ*. The popularity of stories told in the Gundam world remain high, and even though *Char's Counterattack* brings to an end many of the plot lines of the Gundam world, it is likely that further Gundam stories will be produced.

SETTING

In the year 0093 U.C. (Universal Century), the Earth Union Government (EUG) is under a state of siege from the forces of the Neo-Jion. Led

LE SUIT GUNDAM
COUNTER ATTACK

by the enigmatic Char Aznable, the Neo-Jion have pledged to bring independence to the spacenoids (those born in space, free of Earth's gravity) even if it means the destruction of every living thing on Earth. The Neo-Jion warn the EUG that if their previously denied demands for free space immigration are not met, the Earth will be bombarded with asteroids within six months' time. As Earth scrambles to prepare for the imminent attack, the Neo-Jion move up the siege by four months. Severely outnumbered and poorly equipped, the Lond Bell forces are the only thing standing between Earth and the onslaught of the vastly superior Neo-Jion.

Char's Counterattack brings to a climax the story that began in the original *Mobile Suit Gundam*—the clash of wills between Char Aznable and Amuro Rey.

THE STORY

Von Braun City, Luna

Chein Agi and Oktober Saran are at the Anaheim Electronics mobile suit development facility. Both engineers are in the process of unwrapping the newest mobile suit—the RX-93 Nu Gundam. Chein and Oktober discuss the war and the fact that the Nu Gundam's production was sped up by ten days due to the premature Neo-Jion attack orchestrated by Char Aznable.

India, Earth

In a sleepy Indian town, Quess Paraya and her friends, Jion supporters, run from the police. When they are finally captured, Christina (a girl with whom Quess is studying to master newtype abilities) asks what they have done wrong. "Abducting a minor," comes the sharp reply as the officer strikes Christina with his billy club. "You low life do not deserve to be running around free having fun."

Quess is immediately turned over by the police to her father and his mistress, Katherine. Quess bites her in a fit of rebellion, but Katherine's complaints fall upon deaf ears. As the car carrying the family speeds off for the space port, one of the police asks, "Who was that?"

"That..." responds the disgusted chief, "it's called the family of a high Earth Federal Government official. Do they really think they can cure that kind of delinquency by taking her into space?"

Quess and family fly to the Hong Kong space port. On board the airliner, Quess and her father discuss the impending war. "Why couldn't the Earth government stop Char's plan to refrigerate the Earth?" asks Quess.

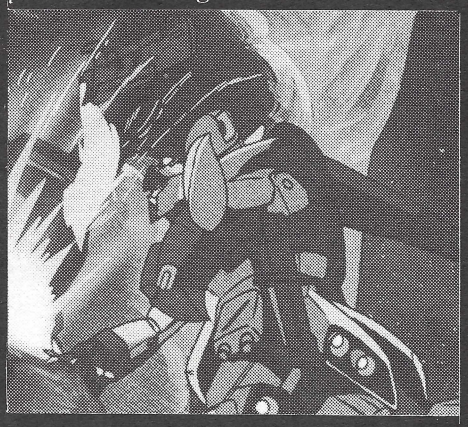
"The federal government didn't even believe Char was alive."

"Ten billion people live in space. You look down on them from Earth and think you understand. How ironic!"

5th Luna, Space

The forces of Lond Bell are mobilizing against the Neo-Jion and the approaching asteroid, 5th Luna, is about to be dropped upon the Earth.

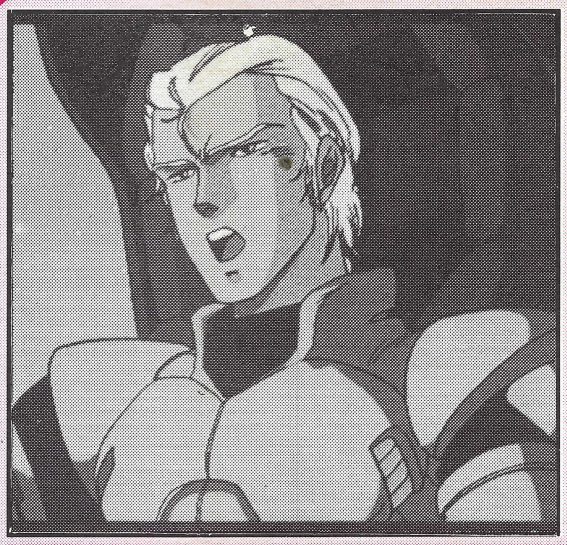
As 5th Luna accelerates toward Earth, Char gives the command to retrieve all mobile suits. Nanai informs him that they cannot release Minovski particles now for electronic counter measures, so it will be dangerous for mobile suits to return. Char doesn't want the mobile suits or his ace pilot Gyunei to be harmed, so he leaves the *Reurula* in the Sazabi to provide covering fire.



Amuro and Gyunei are engaged in combat with Gyunei on the losing side, even though his Jagd Doga is more powerful than Amuro's Re-GZ. Just as Amuro is about to destroy the damaged Jagd Doga, Char arrives and saves Gyunei. In the resulting confusion, the disoriented Gyunei runs into one of Re-GZ's inflatable dummies, which explodes, causing Gyunei's Jagd Doga more damage.

GUNDAM

Neo-Jion Forces Led By. . .



The 33-year-old one-time AEUG member is now hailed as the Fuhrer of the Neo-Jion. He has become disillusioned with the constant bureacracy of the Earth Union Government and now pursues a more direct path toward spacenoid independence. Char pilots the MSN-04 Sazabi, the Neo-Jion's most powerful newtype mobile suit (MS). Haunted by the memories of his dead love, Lalah Sun, Char seeks vengeance upon Amuro Rey.

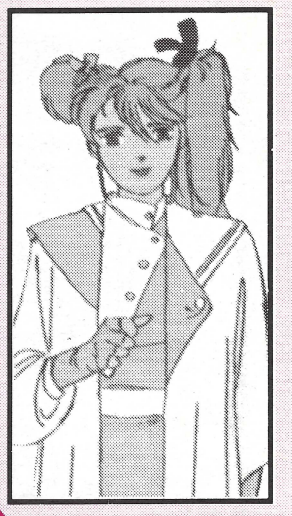
CHAR AZNABLE

NANAI MIGERU

The president of Newtype Research Institute and the commander of Neo-Jion fleet operations. Beautiful and efficient, she is also Char's confidant and lover. Nanai is given the task of training the Neo-Jion's newest recruit, Quess Paraya.

QUESS PARAYA

The daughter of the high Earth official, Adenauwer Paraya, Quess joins the Neo-Jion when she discovers in Char the strong father figure that she has been unconsciously searching for. A powerful newtype, Quess goes from being a spoiled little girl to becoming a dangerous warrior. Initially, she pilots a MSN-03 Jagd Doga; later, she is placed at the controls of the NZ-333 Alpha Azieru, a giant Psychommu mobile armor of awesome power. Quess bears a certain fondness for both Gyunei Guss and Hassaway Noah.



GYUNEI GUSS

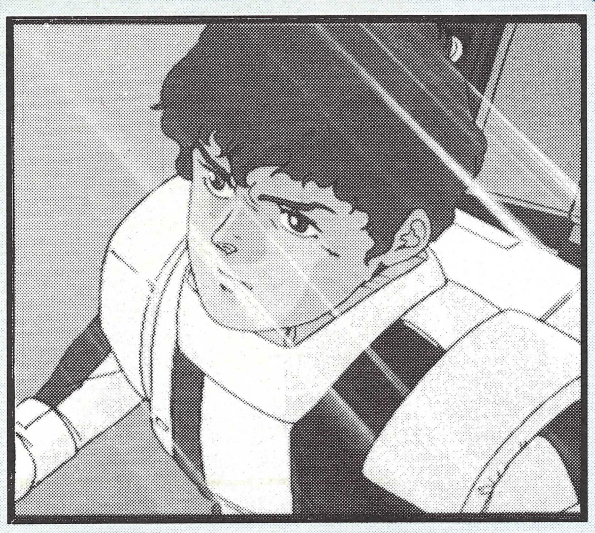
The first successfully reinforced artificial newtype. An ace pilot of Neo-Jion, Gyunei wants only to serve the Neo-Jion cause and believes in their ideals of newtypes being the superior race. He pilots the MSN-03 Jagd Doga and the RMS Hobby Hi-Zack. Confused by his romantic interest for Quess, Gyunei mistakes Char's interest in Quess as something obscene. Gyunei's newtype reinforcement was overseen by Nanai Migeru.

LEZUN SCHNEIDER

A Neo-Jion ace who pilots a blue AMS-119 Geara Doga. A "normal" pilot, Lezun resents all newtypes, stating that they can't help but be good pilots. She feels that only hard training can create good pilots. She is utterly ruthless in combat, but knows when she is overmatched.

PLAYERS

Lond Bell Forces Led By. . .



Free of his fear of space, the 30-year-old Amuro is now the competent leader of the Lond Bell mobile suit forces. Amuro holds Char personally responsible for the war and is obsessed with stopping him. He pilots the RGZ-91 Re-GZ (**RE**fined **G**undam **Z**eta) and the RX-93 Nu Gundam. Although he is often consumed by his duties, Amuro still manages a romantic relationship with Chein Agi.

AMURO REY

HASSAWAY NOAH

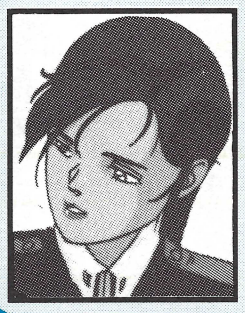
Sent into space by his mother, Mirai, to be with his father. It is on this trip that he meets and falls in love with Quess Paraya. A powerful newtype, Hassaway dreams of one day piloting the Nu Gundam. He pilots a junior mobile suit and the RGM-89 Jegan. Hassaway has an overwhelming desire to please his father, Bright Noah.

BRIGHT NOAH

Commander of the Lond Bell forces and captain of the *Lar Kailum*. Once the "stuffed shirt" of the EMF (Earth Military Forces), Bright has opened up to become a fiery and charismatic leader whose knowledge of space tactics is unmatched. Like many of his comrades, Bright resents the poor treatment of the Lond Bell by the Earth Union Government. He is constantly having to repel attacks upon the *Lar Kailum* by Lezun Schneider.

CHEIN AGI

A 26-year-old bubbly and charming mobile suit engineer of the Lond Bell. Chein oversees the installation of the new alloy that makes the Nu Gundam's Psycho-Frame so powerful. On her person Chein carries the original Psycho-Frame sample, a T-shaped superconcentrated sample of the Nu Gundam's alloy which operates as a miniature Psycho-Frame. Chein is deeply in love with Amuro Rey.

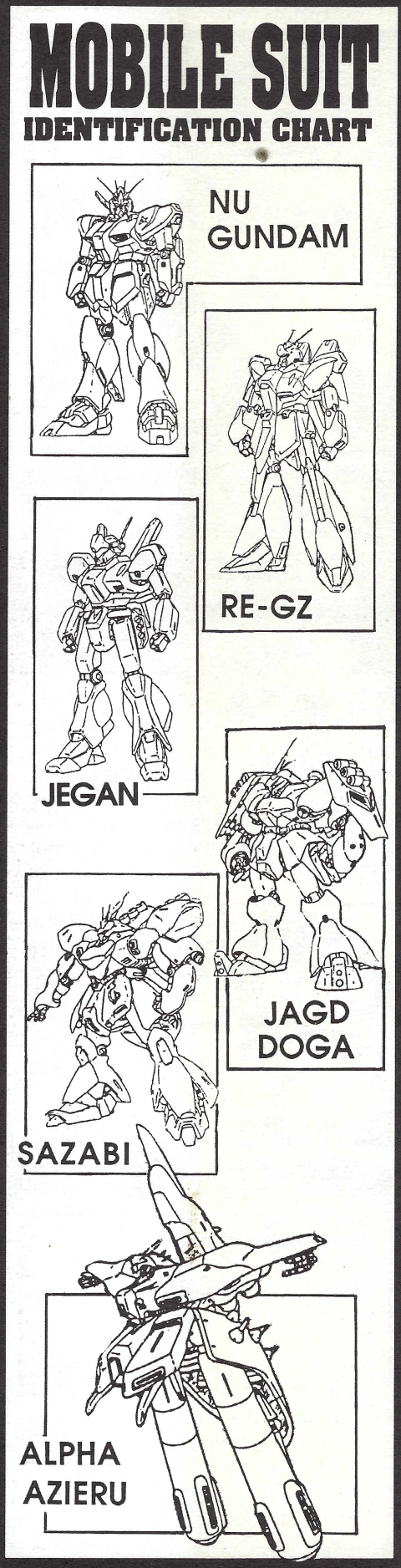


KAYRA SU

A blond-haired pilot of the RGM-89 Jegan and the RGZ-91 Re-GZ. Her personal emblem of a heart and lightning bolt gives insight into Kayra's personality. Her skill as a mobile suit pilot earns her special attention from enemy mobile suit pilots.

ASTONAUGE MENDOSA

The deck officer of the *Lar Kailum*, Mendosa has served under Bright Noah since *Zeta Gundam* and has a romantic relationship with the *Lar Kailum*'s ace pilot Kayra Su.



Char and Amuro clash, crossing beam sabers. Amuro demands of Char, "Why are you dropping 5th Luna? The Earth will freeze and people won't be able to live there any longer. There'll be a nuclear winter!"

Char points at Earth and responds that the people of Earth are selfish; that is why he has declared their extermination. "Man shouldn't punish Man," chides Amuro. Char is unfazed.

"I, Char Aznable, will enforce my judgement of the Earth, Amuro."

"That's just your ego."

"You know that Earth won't last the way [things are going]."

Amuro retreats into 5th Luna. Char and Gyunei follow. Amuro turns suddenly and fires, damaging Gyunei once more. The Re-GZ retreats further into 5th Luna.

Gyunei offers to go return on his own so Char can pursue Amuro, but Char says that it would be dangerous to return alone in a damaged suit, so they leave together.

Hong Kong, Earth

Mirai, Chieming, and Hassaway Noah are waiting to board a shuttle leaving Earth. Mirai is informed by a clerk that there are no seats available on this flight. Since it is difficult to get permission to leave Earth and Mirai already has her tickets in hand, she knows that something is wrong.

Meanwhile, Adenauwer's mistress has just left him, saying that she would rather freeze to death on Earth than spend one more minute with Quess. Adenauwer then tells the airline clerk that he will only be needing two tickets. Mirai interrupts, saying that she has a letter from Mr. John Bower of the Earth Federal Government and that there must be a mistake.

Adenauwer pulls the clerk aside and tells him to let one of Mirai's party on board. By using his offical privileges for boarding priority, he usurped the three seats meant for the Noahs; he also owes John Bower a favor. The clerk shakes his head and mumbles, "Politicians!" He then informs Mirai that he can seat one person on this flight and two on the next.

Because of the war, Mirai is doubtful that there will *be* a next shuttle. She decides to send Hassaway ahead to Londenion to meet his father. Hassaway is reluctant to leave his family, but agrees when his mother assures him that they will be along on the next shuttle or will follow him right away.

***Lar Kailum*/Side 2, Space**

Amuro Rey returns from a patrol and docks the Re-GZ outside of the *Lar Kailum* and joins Bright Noah on the bridge. Sargent Hanon (a nurse from *Zeta Gundam*) then takes Re-GZ inside for repairs and servicing.

Bright and Amuro are nervous because the support they were expecting from Side 2 in the form of a laser cannon attack against 5th Luna is late, and Side 1 has refused to help at all.

"That's why Char beats us!" complains the frustrated Amuro. "The colonies are on his side. And by the way, where did he get the nuclear fuel for 5th Luna?"

"Probably from the Earth government," responds a cynical Bright Noah.

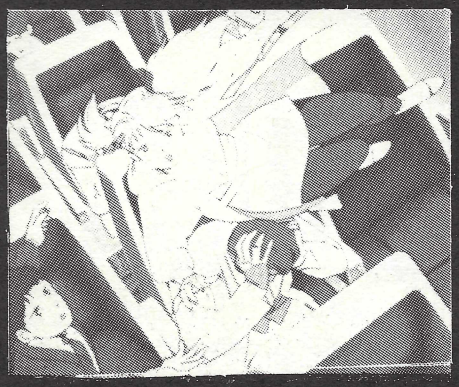
At Side 2, Jion rebels destroy the supporting laser cannons with explosive charges.

Hong Kong, Earth

The shuttle captain informs an impatient Adenauwer that they have permission to take off, but that a meteorite will be passing close by. Adenauwer is unconcerned, saying that all the shuttle pilots should be

worried about is arriving at Londenion on time. The pilots put on "normal suits" (space suits) as a precaution.

As the shuttle launches into space, it comes very close to 5th Luna. Quess senses the nearness and screams, "A fireball! Captain, steer to the right!" As the captain wildly changes his course, Quess is thrown out of her seat and into



Hassaway's arms. Adenauwer is terrified and whimpers to God. Quess notices this and spits on him out of disgust.

5th Luna crashes into Earth, destroying the EUG headquarters in Tibet.

***Lar Kailum*, Space**

Amuro pounds his fist agaianst the wall. "Pathetic!" he exclaims. "We're just sitting here, watching Char beat us. I'm going to the Moon." Amuro storms off the bridge. Bright joins Amuro as they head toward the flight deck. Amuro asks why after two years of investigation they could not predict Char's attack. Bright tells Amuro that the colonies resent the Earth government and when the Lond Bell comes to investigate a colony, the people hide and protect the Jions. Amuro doesn't think Char will attack again soon, so he leaves for the Moon on a Base Jabber (a mobile suit sled). As he leaves, Amuro calls to Bright, "If all goes well, I should be able to hit Char before he enters Sweet Water."

Anaheim Electronics, Moon

Descending into the base, Amuro is met by Chein Agi and Oktober. Chein informs Amuro that Anaheim is also building mobile suits for the Neo-Jion. Amuro asks Oktober whether or not this is true. Oktober merely shrugs and says, "We are the technical department and we only follow orders. It does not concern us who buys the product."

Chein cuddles up to Amuro, telling him that Oktober didn't believe that she was a member of the *Lar Kailum*'s crew. Amuro smiles and says that's because she is too charming. Oktober then begins Amuro's briefing of Nu Gundam. The suit is equipped with a Psychommu receptor pack—a device that acts as newtype radar showing the brainwave patterns of the enemy. In addition, built into the linear seat, is the Psycho-Frame: a series of computer chips that are the size of metal particles. These chips are superconductive of newtype energy and greatly boost the performance of Nu Gundam. However, the way the frame is designed, Amuro cannot eject if there is trouble. Amuro is surprised that Oktober knows so much about Psychommu technology. Oktober responds by saying all of his information came from the Materials Development Department.

Amuro and Chein decide to take Nu Gundam back to the *Lar Kailum* for testing. Oktober says that this is impossible; it will take three more days to prepare Nu Gundam for combat. "No . . . now!" says Amuro.

Char's Fleet, Space

Using holographic images Char delivers a speech to his fleet, congratulating the success of their first mission. Char orders the fleet to disperse and rendezvous back at Sweet Water colony. During the adjourning staff meeting, Char comments that his formal uniform makes him look like a jester, to which Holst Harness, a political adviser, responds, "No. You need an image-building device as the Neo-Jion's Fuhrer."

Gyunei catches Char in the hallway and apologizes for his poor performance in the 5th Luna battle. Char retorts that the Neo-Jion have spent a great deal of time and money training him at the Newtype Research Institute. "I can't afford to lose you," he says.

"Don't worry about it," adds Nanai as she and Char depart the scene. Gyunei then excuses himself, but can't quite seem to decide what title with which to precede Nanai's name.

Caesus M. Baiyar (a financial supporter of the Neo-Jion cause) inquires whether Gyunei has been reinforced too much, making him unstable and unfit as Char's bodyguard. Char defends Gyunei by saying, "He is young and only wants to do a good job." Caesus remembers his original train of thought and asks Char if he understands what it means to be the Neo-Jion Fuhrer. Char's response is typical. "So I face the administrative jobs as well, don't I?"

***Lar Kailum*, Space**

Melan, Bright's First Officer, informs Bright that the enemy is on the move. "What's going on?" ponders Bright. "Why are they [Char] between Side 1 and the Moon?"

"What is Char up to?" asks Melan.

"Anaheim should be following our moves," remarks Bright. "Contact Amuro. Hurry and prepare the battle bridge!"

Anaheim Electronics, Moon

Chein brings a message to Amuro from *Lar Kailum*. "I'm to return to Lond Bell," reads Amuro. He informs an attending mobile suit engineer that he's finished with his adjust-

ments. "But you're not—!" the engineer protests as Amuro brushes him aside. Chein follows Amuro into the Nu Gundam.

Amuro and Chein prepare the Nu Gundam to travel to *Lar Kailum*. A rumble seat has been rigged so Chein can accompany Amuro and evaluate the new Psychommu systems.

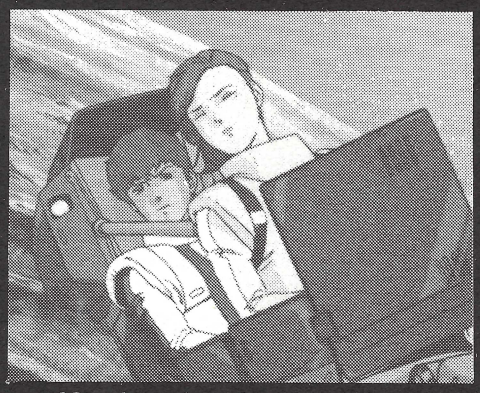
Char's Fleet, Space

Lezun Schneider reluctantly launches from a catapult deck, complaining, "What kind of operation is this? Mobile suits are for close combat." Lezun is being sent as a diversion from Char's trip to Londenion.

Battleground, Space

Nu Gundam launches from the mass driver on the Moon with an incredible amount of force. Via radio, Chein instructs Oktober to be certain he sends the original Psycho-Frame sample to her at Lond Bell.

The high G-force stress of the launch causes Chein to pass out. Amuro plots their course as she lies unconscious. Meanwhile, unknown to Amuro, the *Lar Kailum* has engaged a Neo-Jion mobile suit squadron under the command of Lezun Schneider. Chein regains consciousness and moves to the back of the linear seat, taking the jerry-rigged seat with her.



Nearby, the shuttle containing Hassaway, Adenauwer, and Quess, is disabled and must undergo repairs to the engines. The repair crew outside the shuttle are frantic about the possibility of the battle coming to them. "If you don't do the repairs," says the shuttle's captain, "we're going to go right into it!"

The Neo-Jion are winning the battle, and Lezun is just about to destroy Kayra Su's Jegan when a tremendous blast of energy tears through the battle area. Lezun disengages to investigate. However, another blast changes her mind and she decides it would be prudent to withdraw, rather than face an unknown enemy with this kind of power. Moments later, the Nu Gundam appears, just as the Neo-Jion are leaving. Hassaway looks out from the shuttle window and can't believe what he sees. "Gundam!"

Amuro prepars to enter the battle, and is suspicious when the Neo-Jions retreat too easily.

***Lar Kailum*, Space**

The crew of *Lar Kailum* helps offload the shuttle passengers, who are still unaccustomed to low gravity and are having problems moving about. Hassaway spots his father and tries to move toward him, but bumps into the ceiling instead. Bright asks him if he is all right, then asks where Mirai and Chieming are. Hassaway tells him that they should be up on the next shuttle.

Adenauwer interrupts the father-son reunion and reminds Bright of the need to arrive at Londenion on schedule. Quess and Hassaway then leave for a tour of the ship.

Meanwhile, Amuro is asleep and dreaming of Lalah. In his dream, she appears as a white swan.

"Don't think that you can have both of us!" warns Amuro.

In a dreamy voice, Lalah replies that she just want to watch over and be with them both. Amuro refutes her statement.

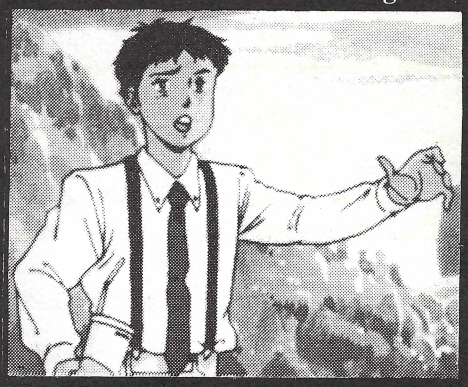
"I want to be eternally between both of you," says Lalah.

"Deny Char!"

"He is pure," Lalah says, transforming into the white swan. Amuro awakens abruptly, exclaiming, "Pure?" He curses, realizing he's repeating a dream he's had many times before.

Chein buzzes Amuro on the video phone to tell him that he is needed on the mobile suit deck. "I'll be there in ten minutes," Amuro says.

Waiting outside Amuro's cabin is a drowsy Chein Agi. As time passes, she curls up into a ball and falls asleep. Amuro finally emerges from his cabin and reluctantly wakes the sleeping Chein, who does not attempt to hide her enthusiasm at seeing him.



Back on the flight deck, Quess and Hassaway are allowed to practice on the mobile suit simulator by Astonauge Mendosa. Astonauge comments how easily Quess is taking to the program and that she will be an excellent mobile suit pilot. Quess leaves the simulator so Hassaway can have his turn. Unknowingly, she sees Amuro Rey for the first time. "Miss Quess Paraya?" asks Amuro. "Civilians aren't allowed past this point." At Chein's call Amuro moves toward her, at the base of the Nu Gundam.

"That's Amuro Rey?" wonders Quess. She mocks Chein's affection for Amuro in a falsetto voice.

Quess and Hassaway take a break in the rec room. While they enjoy drinks, they discuss Amuro Rey, and what it is to be a newtype.

Londenion, Space

Aboard the shuttle entering Londenion, the pilot informs Char that the colony docking crew has accepted their code transmission for landing.

***Lar Kailum*, Space**

Quess sneaks into the mobile suit hangar to get a peek at the Nu Gundam. Chein catches her and tells her she's not allowed in this area. Quess confronts Chein, questioning *her* authority to be in the hangar, and demands that she leave the ship and

Amuro Rey. She's interested in Amuro, says Quess, because she is interested in newtypes. Her angry words cause her to lose control of herself and she begins to spin uncontrollably. Hassaway rescues her with a well-thrown rope.

Later, and in a different part of the ship, Hassaway informs Quess that they've arrived at Londenion. Hassaway begins to understand the Jion point of view a little better, finally seeing the grandeur of a colony for himself.

On the bridge, Amuro and Bright question Char's intentions. Bright feels that Char will be involved with the people of Sweet Water because he needs another asteroid to complete his plan of freezing Earth. Amuro realizes that's why Adenauwer is coming to Londenion—he's going to negotiate with the people of Sweet Water, who are working on behalf of the Neo-Jion. Bright agrees with this assessment.

"Char fought along beside us with the AEUG, but in doing that he realized the true nature of Earth's people and abandoned faith in them. That's why he's set out to bring an end to everything."

"Everything..." says Bright.

Londenion, Space

Lar Kailum docks at Londenion. Adenauwer thanks Bright as Captain for getting him to Londenion within the scheduled time. Now, he says, I can save Earth.

"Good luck with your meeting," says Bright.

"What meeting? With who? Where?"

"I can't think that you, a man who controls the space force, came out here for a walk."

Adenauwer says stiffly, "Until there's a press release, the fact that I'm here is top secret." As Adenauwer and Quess board the waiting limousine, Cameron Bloom [former love interest of Mirai] greets them and offers his services. He wonders to himself how well Bright Noah is doing with Mirai.

Chein, Amuro and Hassaway descend to the colony for some much needed R & R. Amuro discusses the intricacies of Adenauwer Paraya.

"On the surface, he's having us, the Lond Bell, hunt the remains of the Jion. Underneath, he's negotiating with the Neo-Jion." Chein remarks that Adenauwer is, after all, a politician.

"Can you be satisfied with that?"

Chein excuses herself, saying she has work to do. Hassaway receives a call from Quess, who is bored and wants to accompany Hassaway and Amuro on their expedition.

The high command of both Neo-Jion and the Earth Federation are seated at a long conference table, bickering amongst themselves. Cameron Bloom is present as administrator of Londenion, confused as to what is going on. Suddenly, a hush falls over the room as Char Aznable, adorned in his dress uniform, enters the room and walks purposefully to his seat at the conference table.

The Neo-Jion want to purchase the asteroid base Axcis, which was captured from the Jions by the EFG at the conclusion of Haman Kahn's reign. "If you agree to these terms and sign the papers," says Adenauwer, "asteroid base Axcis will be sold to Neo-Jion." Cameron listens in shock, not having been informed of the sale. The deal, say Neo-Jion forces, is this: in return for their own disarmament, they will be allowed to purchase Axcis. Their intention, they state, is to relocate Axcis near Sweet Water, repopulate it, and make it part of their colonies. They offer a huge sum in gold for Axcis [gold that was probably from Char's father—hinted at in *Mobile Suit Gundam*, but never confirmed]. Neo-Jion, they continue, would prefer to move Axcis themselves—with disarmament, there will be no need for a military, and they can't compensate their men. Moving Axcis themselves will give the military something to do.

The temptation is too great, and the EUG agrees to the sale. Back at the hotel, Char mutters, "If Lond Bell knew we were here, all hell would break loose.

"Amuro—I'm doing something of evil intent. If you're near, sense me."

Amuro gives Hassaway and Quess a driving tour of Londenion. As they pass a marsh full of cranes, the sight of the birds in flight causes Amuro's thoughts to again turn to Lalah. This is the place where he first met, in person, Lalah...and Char. He becomes so wrapped up in thought that he almost runs into—Char! Out horseback riding, Char is taken by surprise at the sight of his old enemy.

Upon seeing Char, Amuro goes berserk and tries to run him down. Char calls to Gyunei to pick him up. Leaping from the jeep, Amuro knocks Char off his horse, and the two adversaries fall heavily to the ground.

Amuro and Char trade blow for blow, neither man taking the lead. Amuro manages to get a stranglehold on Char, but the stronger Neo-Jion leader flips Amuro off him. Landing on his feet, the nimble Amuro draws his gun and prepares to fire. Quess sees this, runs to Amuro, and knocks the gun out of his hand. Snatching up the gun, she points it at Amuro and yells, "What are you thinking of? Are you crazy?!" Char puts his hand on the gun and asks Quess, "Do you want to come with me?" Gyunei arrives in the Hobby Hi-Zack, a red, white, and blue "sport" mobile suit. Taking Quess by the hand, she and Char are carried off in the hands of the Hobby Hi-Zack. Gyunei then flies through the colony, past the Federation troops guarding the entrance to the space

dock. Char asks Quess if she wants to return to the Lond Bell, but the impressionable Quess would rather stay with him.

In his office, Cameron Bloom and Bright Noah exchange pleasantries and then get to the real business—Char is on Londenion. Cameron fills Bright in on the situation. The Earth Union Government, continues Cameron, believes that they have made peace with Char.

At the shuttle dock, Gyunei brings Char and Quess safely in. After boarding the shuttle, they launch for *Reurula*.

On the way back to the *Lar Kailum*, Bright questions Adenauwer about the outcome of the meeting. Bright cannot convince Adenauwer that he has made a mistake in dealing with Char. Adenauwer asks Bright to have Quess return his call.

Reurula, Enroute to Sweet Water

Once aboard the *Reurula*, Gyunei takes Quess out in the Hobby Hi-Zack for a little excitement. Quess takes to the mobile suit very quickly and executes a series of fancy maneuvers to impress Char while flirting with Gyunei. Char is impressed by Quess; she has courage and skill. A plan begins to form in his mind.

Later that evening, Char casually converses with Quess. He questions her intentions in leaving Amuro. Because she agreed with Char's philosophy, she was willing to leave Amuro and the others, who weren't even her friends yet.

Londenion, Space

Hassaway makes arrangements to purchase a "junior" mobile suit. As he tells the junkyard's proprietor, he wants to obtain a pilot's license and support himself.

Sweet Water, Space

The next day, Quess trains with a Jagd Doga, and Nanai instructs her in Char's special funnel-warfare technique. The funnels launch and then are fired by simply "imagining" the target.

That evening on the train, during the trip back to their apartments, Quess, Gyunei and Char are greeted warmly by the people of Sweet Water. The people sing the Neo-Jion anthem enthusiastically.

"To the light of the stars, on this our thoughts depend...

If we embrace the burning galaxy in our hearts

Someday we will hold the dream in our hands...."

They sing Char's name in refrain.

In the limousine, Quess asks Char if he will destroy the Earth. "I'm not going to destroy it. I just want the Earth to rest awhile." As Char leaves the limousine, he kisses Quess's hand and says that he has confidence in her abilities. Quess is speechless.

Relaxing at home, Nanai asks Char if he's sure what he wants. He replies that it's too late to start lecturing now. He believes in the reformation of humanity, but to do that, someone must carry the karma of humanity upon his back.

Nanai asks bluntly if it isn't true that Char started the entire operation just to get even with Amuro.

"Do I look like such a small man?" retorts Char.

"Amuro Rey," says Nanai, "is a man who is mistaken to believe that kindness is the weapon of a newtype. A female could forgive a man like that, but Captain—you can't." Char stares into memory and recalls Lalah Sun, who found the kindness she sought in his enemy, Amuro. Char sees her death once more.

Nanai interrupts his reverie. Char says, "People who are too much alike have no choice but to hate each other." Char tells Nanai that he will preceed her to Axcis and wait there for her. He inquires after Quess and then leaves the room. Nanai is vexed at his constant concern for Quess.

Sitting outside on the patio at a Jion party, Gyunei and Quess talk of the destiny of the Jion, Char, his interest in Quess and the nature of newtypes.

Hong Kong, Earth

Mirai and her daughter are living in squalor among the refugees of Earth. Chieming asks Mirai about the shuttle, and if Char will destroy the Earth. Yes, says Mirai. She is certain that he will try to do so.

Sweet Water, Space

The next day, Char gives a rallying speech for the people of Sweet Water, reviewing the history of the Jion Empire. The people of Sweet Water are deeply touched by Char's words and roar their approval, "Sieg Jion! Sieg Jion!" Char then orders the waiting fleet to launch and secure Luna 2 (a Federation strategic base), and to take the nuclear weapons stored there. An inflatable dummy of the *Reurula* is sent with the battle fleet as a diversion. This bit of subterfuge will give the impression that Char is at Luna 2 while in reality he is still at Sweet Water.

Luna 2

The Lond Bell forces prepare for the arrival of Char's fleet. Aboard a Lond Bell cruiser, everyone is confident that things will go as Char said they would.

Londenion, Space

The *Lar Kailum* is docked. Amuro overhears Bright accepting the aid of 15 nuclear missiles which were intended for a museum from Cameron, who wishes Mirai to remain safe. Cameron asks if it's a lie that Neo-Jion will disarm.

"Probably," says Amuro.

Sweet Water/Nanai's Fleet, Headed for Luna 2

The *Reurula* launches from Sweet Water with the new mobile armor, NZ-333 Alpha Azieru. On the mobile suit deck of Nanai's ship, Gyunei is exchanging words with Lezun. She teases him about his artificial newtype status. Gyunei responds, "I am a newtype." Lezun laughs.

Quess joins Gyunei asking,"Why do you even waste your time talking to these mere humans." Lezun grows angry and throws a wrench at her. When Quess tries to defend Gyunei,

Lezun laughs again saying, "How cute, now he's hiding behind girls."

Luna 2

The forces of Neo-Jion launch a surprise attack against the Federal forces. Most of the Federal forces are destroyed by the initial missile barrage, and the mobile suits are launched to clean up the remaining Federal forces. Gyunei tells Quess to stay close to him since this will be her first time in combat. Quess splits off from the main forces to attack a Lond Bell cruiser on her own. She senses the presence of her father on the ship but does not consciously realize it, and destroys the bridge. However, her Jagd Doga has sustained heavy damage. She begins to feel the enormity of her actions and tries to tear off her normal suit, saying, "This feels bad, it feels terrible!" She heads back toward Nanai's ship.

Nanai looks over at the captain and says, "Tell Captain Char that we have taken Luna 2."

***Lar Kailum*, Londenion**

Hassaway uses his tears of being left behind as a device to sneak away from his father and Cameron with the intent to sneak aboard *Lar Kailum*. Hassaway enters an airlock with his junior mobile suit, pleased that his plan is working.

The Nu Gundam's fin funnels are being tested aboard the mobile suit deck. Amuro says to Bright, "If our fleet and Char's fleet leave at the same time from Londenion and Luna 2, respectively, we'd get to Axcis first. Do you think Char will make this kind of stupid mistake?"

Chein mentions that Char's fleet had one extra ship travelling to Luna 2. Amuro replies, "That's my point." He shows pictures of the Neo-Jion fleet. "See, these ships are dummies."

"Then Char must already be at Axcis!" exclaims Bright.

Axcis, Space

Char destroys the last of the Federal forces guarding Axcis and launches mobile suits to investigate the colony.

Nanai's Fleet, Enroute to Axcis

Quess comes upon Nanai and Captain Lyle gloating over their victory. Nanai asks Quess why she isn't in her battle suit. Quess says flippantly that it's uncomfortable. Nanai slaps Quess for her impertinence and orders her to get dressed and wait in the ready room.

Hong Kong, Earth

The streets are congested with traffic, as everyone is attempting to leave Hong Kong all at once because they know the city is the next target for Char's attack. Chieming wonders about Hassaway, to which Mirai responds that even the microwaves are being tied up right now.

***Lar Kailum*, Enroute to Axcis**

Within his junior mobile suit, Hassaway Noah is curled into a ball, waiting for the right opportunity to emerge into the ship.

On the mobile suit deck, Kayra oversees the refitting of the Re-GZ with the back weapons system for her own use. *Lar Kailum* comes upon a heavily damaged Federation ship and a survivor, who reports that Adenauwer and the captain were killed. He also brings news of Char's fleet removing the nuclear weapons from Luna 2 and transporting them to Axcis.

Nanai's Ship, Enroute to Axcis

Upset by Nanai, Quess goes to the mobile suit deck and prepares to launch her damaged Jagd Doga. Gyunei tries to stop her, but is unsuccessful. Quess insists that she is going to find Char. Nanai and the captain allow Quess to go, happy to be rid of the troublesome girl.

***Lar Kailum*, Enroute to Axcis**

Bright Noah launches a nuclear missile barrage on Axcis. Kayra is on the flight deck when a strange robot catches her eye and leads her to Hassaway Noah, who is trying to remain inconspicuous. The robot is Amuro's old invention, Haro, which bumps into Amuro.

Amuro tells Kayra that he will take care of Hassaway and the two leave to find Hassaway a normal suit.

Axcis, Space

Char is notified of the incoming missiles and launches in the Sazabi to intercept them. Using his funnels he is able to stop the missile barrage, but is shocked to find nuclear weapons among the missiles.

***Lar Kailum*, Near Axcis**

Bright scolds Hassaway for stowing away, saying that it is much too dangerous to be here, and what would Mirai and Chieming do without either of them? Amuro tells Hassaway that Quess is now a tool of Char's, and that he should give up hoping for her. Hassaway refuses to believe him and says that he will rescue Quess himself.

Battleground, Axcis

The Lond Bell and the Neo-Jion engage in battle. As Kayra prepares to launch she makes plans with Astonauge for later. She tells him that she loves him as she takes off. Char gives the signal, and the nuclear engines of Axcis ignite, pushing it slowly towards Earth. In response, *Lar Kailum* deploys a fleet of dummy spacecraft to confuse the Neo-Jion sensors. On board *Lar Kailum*, Chein gives final instructions to Hassaway, who asks what it is she has on her belt. "It's the original Psycho-Frame sample. I still want to do more tests on it."

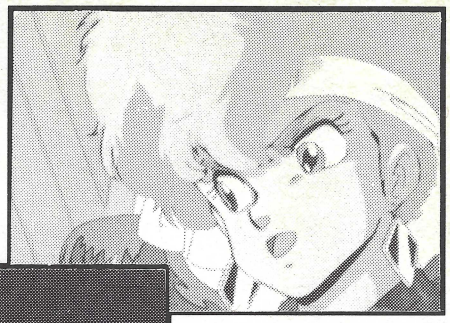
Nanai's forces arrive at Axcis to back up Char. Gyunei launches to find Quess, who at the sight of Axcis, knows she will soon be with Char.

Amuro Rey launches the completed Nu Gundam with the words he hasn't spoken in years: "Gundam—*Ikimasu!*" The mobile suits of both sides engage in battle.

Gyunei encounters a major missile barrage. Now knowing that the Lond Bell forces are using nuclear missiles, he realizes that he must chase after Quess later. He launches his funnels toward the missiles. Concentrating on the missiles with the

continued on page 44

ANIME JA NAI



A Continuing Series on theWorld Behind the Screen

by Trish Ledoux

The results of *Animag*'s questionnaire is in--and it's not what you might think. The following are the Top Ten lists of favorite male, female, and robot characters and the feature they appear in, according to our readers.

Thanks again to everyone who responded to our questionnaire. If your favorite character wasn't listed in the Top Ten, it's because you didn't write!

Notable male characters with only one vote include Ryohei Yamazaki from *Junk Boy*, Ten-chan from *Urusei Yatsura*, and Guyver from the OAV of the same name.

Favorite single-vote female characters include Ami from *Cream Lemon*, C-ko from *Project A-ko*, and the demon spider-woman from *Monster City*.

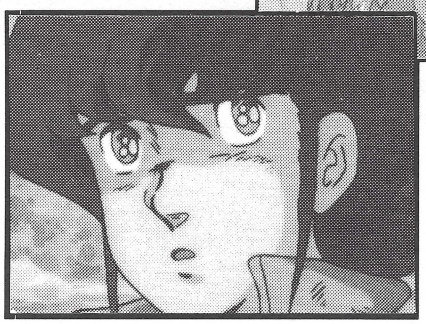
Mecha? We've received votes for everything from the Petite Cola machine in *Robotech/Macross*; Fluffi the gorilla-robot from *Bionic Six*; Opa-opa (a Haro-like robot) from *Zillion*; to Eve Tokimatsuri, the computer construct from *Megazone 23* who's not even hardware, but software. To those of you who asked if *Galaxy Express 999*'s Metel qualifies as mecha, the answer is a resounding *no*.

Iczer-1 was voted both a favorite female *and* mecha character.

NEXT ISSUE: Which anime character do *you* most resemble? Find out in the next Anime Ja Nai.

#1

MALE CHARACTER
RICK/HIKARU



#1

FEMALE CHARACTER
KEI

TOP TEN MALE CHARACTERS

1.	Rick/Hikaru	*Robotech/Macross*
2.	Shin	*Area 88*
3.	Lupin III	*Lupin the Third*
4.	Harlock	*Uchuu Kaizoku Captain Harlock*
5.	Shogo	*Megazone 23*
6.	Maximillan	*Robotech/Macross*
7.	Ataru	*Urusei Yatsura*
7.	"D"	*Vampire Hunter "D"*
7.	Kenshiro	*Hokuto no Ken*
10.	Char	*Mobile Suit Gundam*
10.	Roy	*Robotech/Macross*
10.	Ryo	*City Hunter*

TOP TEN FEMALE CHARACTERS

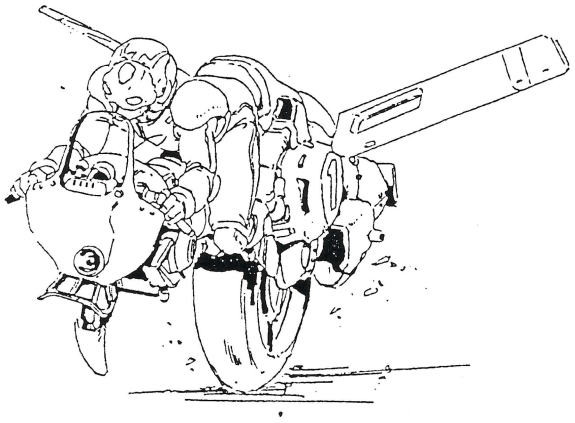
1.	Kei	*Dirty Pair*
2.	Yuri	*Dirty Pair*
3.	Lum	*Urusei Yatsura*
4.	Misa	*Robotech/Macross*
5.	Iczer-1	*Fight! Iczer-1*
6.	Lynn Minmei	*Robotech/Macross*
7.	Nausicaa	*Nausicaa in the Valley of the Wind*
8.	Eve	*Megazone 23*
9.	A-ko	*Project A-ko*
9.	Madoka	*Orange Road*

TOP TEN MECHA CHARACTERS

1.	M-66	*Black Magic M-66*
1.	RX-78 Gundam	*Mobile Suit Gundam*
3.	Dragonar-1	*Metal Armor Dragonar*
3.	MSZ-006 Z Gundam	*Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam*
6.	MSZ-010 Gundam ZZ	*Mobile Suit Gundam Double Zeta*
6.	Veritech Fighter	*Robotech*
6.	Iczer Robo	*Fight! Iczer-1*
9.	VF-1S Valkyrie	*Macross*
9.	Iczer-1	*Fight! Iczer-1*
10.	Analyzer/I.Q. 9	*Yamato/Star Blazers*
10.	Astro Boy	*Astro Boy*
10.	Gorg	*Giant Gorg*
10.	RX-93 Nu Gundam	*Char's Counterattack*
10.	RX-178 Gundam Mk-II	*Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam*

IT IS JUNE OF THE 72ND VENUS YEAR. THE BEGINNING OF THE. . .

VENUS WARS



Yoshikazu Yasuhiko, who brought us *Crusher Joe* and *Arion*, is now animating *The Venus Wars*, a 100-minute feature produced by Kugatsusha (Yasuhiko's own company), which is set for theatrical release in the spring of 1989. *The Venus Wars* has been serialized in *Comic NORA* for the last two years.

The story for the animated feature was written by Yuichi Sasamoto and is based on Yasuhiko's comic version. Character designs have been done by Yasuhiko as well, although mecha designs were done by Makoto Kobayashi, perhaps best known for his work on *Gundam Double Zeta* and the OAV *Dragon's Heaven*. Animation direction is by Sachiko Kamimura of *City Hunter* fame.

THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE VENUS WARS

2003 A.D., May 12 -- A huge ice planetoid impacts on the surface of Venus, creating oceans and an Earth-like environment.
2007 A.D. -- First manned spacecraft lands on Venus.
2012 A.D. (First Venus Year) -- First colony settles on the continent of Ishtar.
3rd Venus Year -- Venus' self-governing committee created in Ishtar.
27th Venus Year -- Ishtar declares independence.
35th Venus Year -- Aphrodia founded and declares itself independent.
46th Venus Year -- Venus colonization plan ends.
55th Venus Year -- The first local dispute (Tilus War).
67th Venus Year -- The second local dispute (Daldanos War).
71st Venus Year -- The third local dispute (Scorpion's Tail War).
72nd Venus Year, June -- Ishtar forces invade Aphrodia's capital, Io City.

The setting of the story is Venus in the near future. With the impact of a gigantic planetoid of ice on the planet surface, Venus was transformed into a world with vast oceans and an Earth-like atmosphere, and becomes a place humanity can immigrate to. This new world is divided and controlled by the independent nations of Aphrodia and Ishtar.

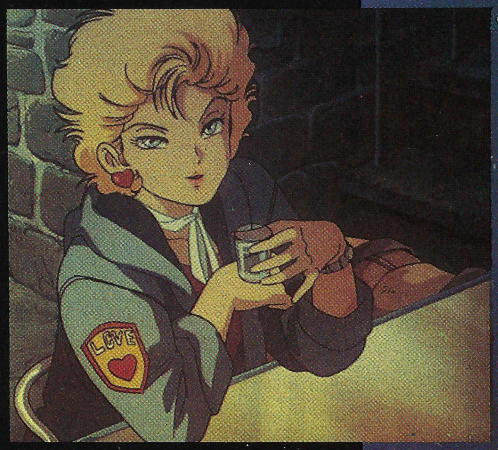
However, the world that awaits humanity is neither a place of fertile lands nor a land of peace. It is a blood-red barren land where the people continually fight over possession of the land.

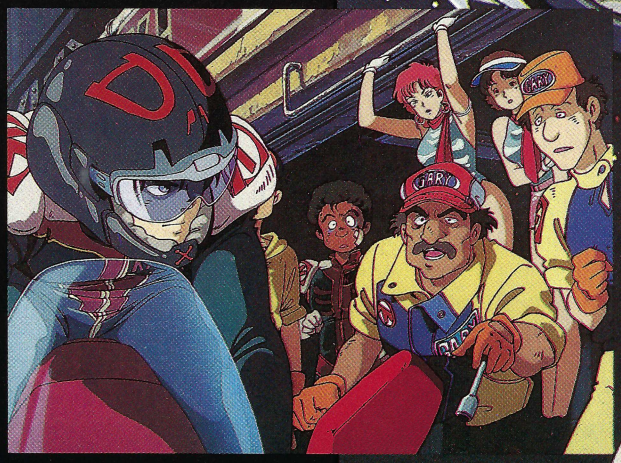
The time is the 72nd Venus Year. The two Venusian nations, Aphrodia and Ishtar, are currently at war over possession of a continent. The capital of Aphrodia, Io City, is attacked by hundreds of Ishtar's newest weapon, the heavy tank nicknamed "Tako."

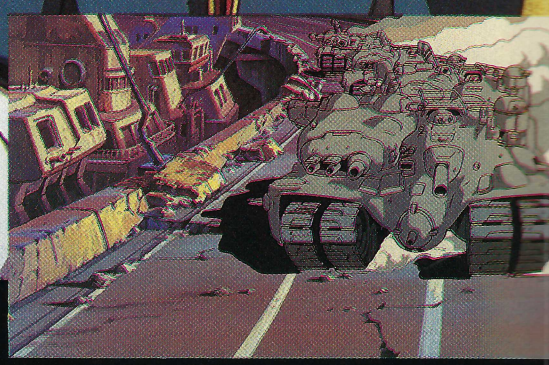
It's through this attack that the heroes of the story--Hiro, Maggie, and Miranda--are pulled into the war. Rolling Game team members (a Venusian sport similar to roller derby, but involving monowheeled bikes), our heroes are highly skilled in handling motor bikes. The army recognizes their talent and recruits them to form a special armored-assault bike group. By using their special bikes, the Aphrodian forces hope to outmaneuver and defeat the larger tanks of the Ishtar army.

Our heroes fight the invading armies of Ishar, not so much for the army and everything it stands for, but for the excitement, for the real-life extension of the Rolling Game. An Earth reporter named Sue Sommers joins the group as she follows their exploits because she hopes to get a good story.

VENUS WARS





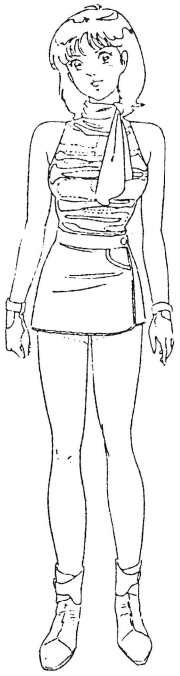


AMERIA
KILLER
KILLER

THE CAST AND THEIR MACHINES

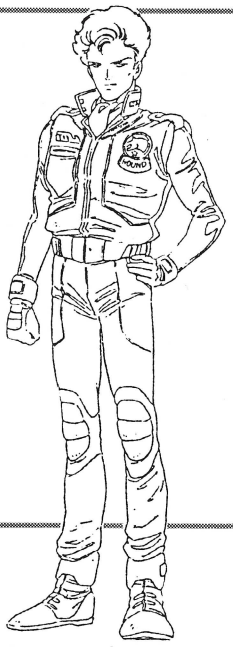
HIROKI SENOO

Main character of the story. Hiro is a rebellious youth who takes out his frustrations in a motor sport called the Rolling Game. His team is named Killer Commanders. Due to the circumstances surrounding the invasion of Io City by Ishtar forces, Hiro joins the Aphrodian combat bike team known as Hound.



MARGOTT NAKAMOTO

Hiro's girlfriend and manager of the Killer Commanders. She is a kind girl who can't believe that the war has come and changed Venus.

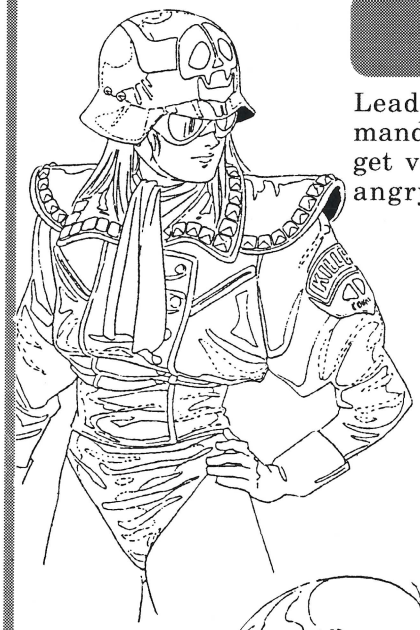


CAPTAIN JEFFREY CARTS

The team leader of the combat team Hound. At the time of the battle between the Killer Commanders and the Ishtar tanks, Carts saves Hiro's life.

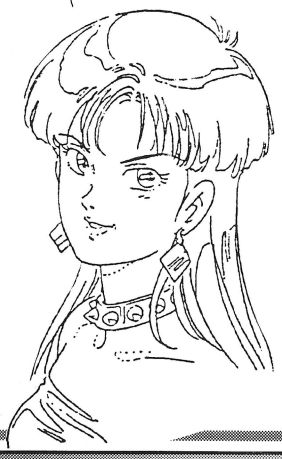
SUSAN SOMMERS

An independent reporter from Earth who works under the guise of an ordinary traveler.



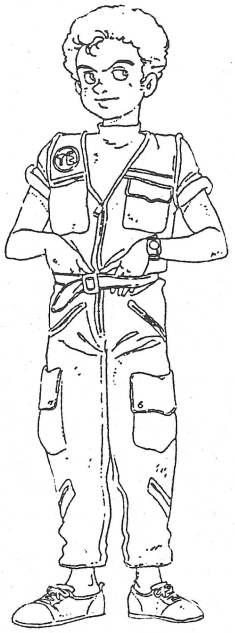
MIRANDA COCKER

Leader of the Killer Commanders. Miranda tends to get very scary when she gets angry.



GARY

The Killer Commanders' sponsor who runs a junkyard/garage. He helps out the Killer Commanders as the team's mechanic.

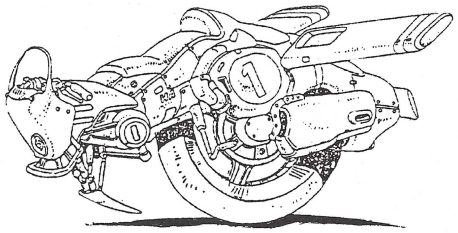


ROB

Gary's assistant.

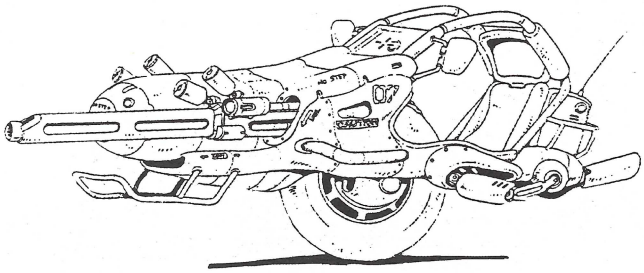
GAME BIKE 1-WHEEL TYPE

Killer Commanders' Rolling Game bikes.



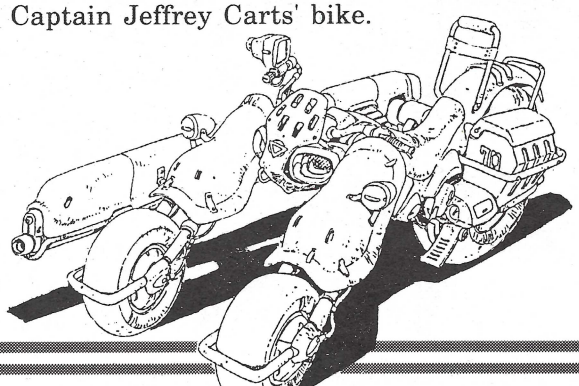
COMBAT BIKE 1-WHEEL TYPE

Standard issue bike for the Hound group.



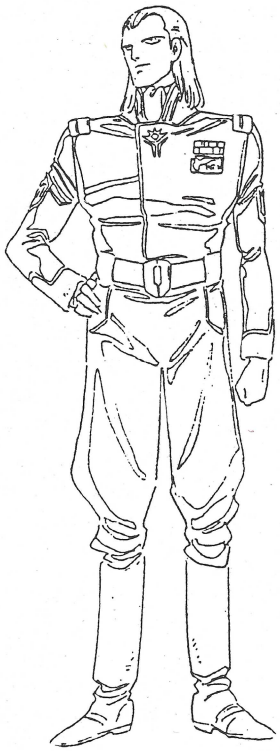
COMBAT BIKE 3-WHEEL TYPE

Captain Jeffrey Carts' bike.



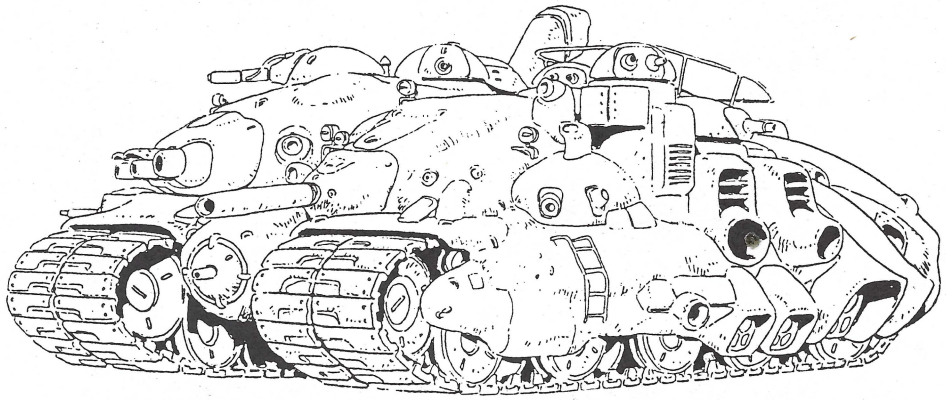
DONNER

Commander of the Ishtar forces attacking Io City.



ADOMIRAL A-1 TANK "TAKO"

A huge, monsterous tank, making up the majority of Ishtar's military might.



PART III

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM

Part I of this article appeared in Animag #1, Part II in Animag #4

STORY THUS FAR. . .

Universal Century 0087--the AEUG and the Titans have engaged in all-out war. Trying to gain an early advantage in the war, the AEUG launches a full-scale attack on Jaburo, the Federal forces military headquarters. Led by Quattro Bagina (Char Aznable) and Camille Vidan, the AEUG strike force discovers that the Federal forces have relocated their primary base of operations and have set a nuclear bomb to detonate and destroy the AEUG intruders. The explosion devastates the Jaburo installation and much of the surrounding terrain, but the majority of the AEUG forces evacuate the area in time.

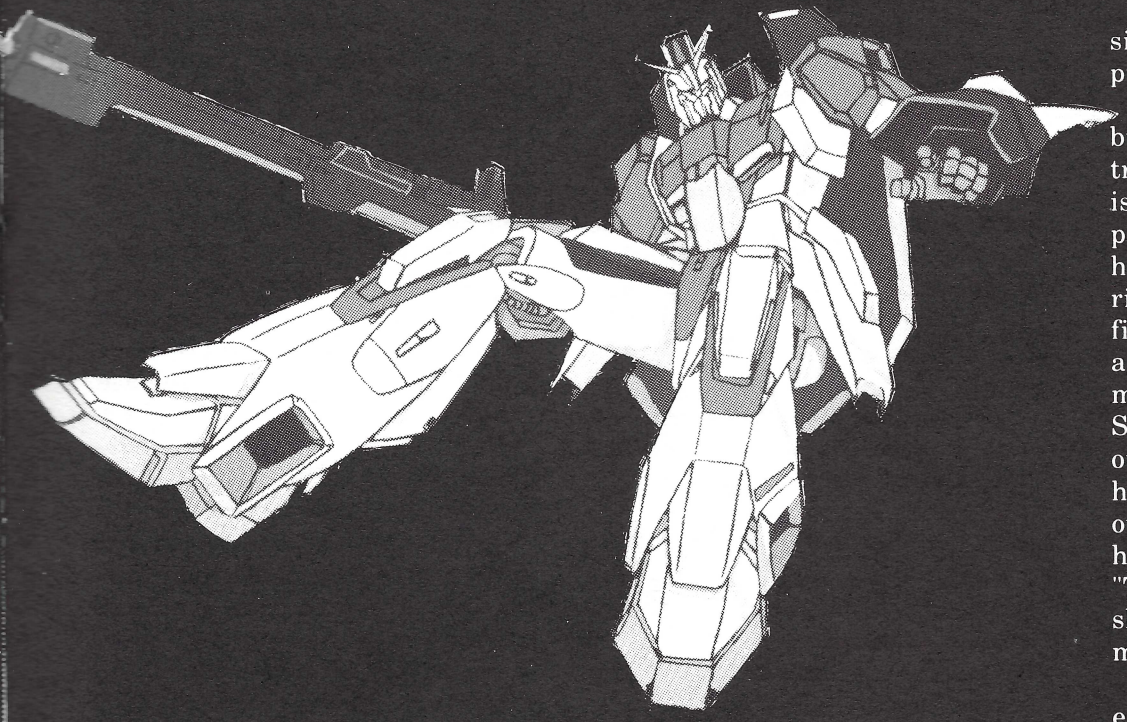
After failing to take over the Federal forces main base, the AEUG forces still on Earth are primarily concerned with getting back to space. Camille and Char stay behind on Earth to defend the shuttle carrying the AEUG pilots. While on their way to another space port, the group arranges a rendezvous with Amuro Rey. With Amuro's help, Katsu Kobayashi and Char are able to launch for space safely. The remainder of the group journeys to New Hong Kong where Camille meets Four Murasame. Four is the Titans Bio-Soldier who pilots the Psycho Gundam. Initially unaware of each other's military status, Camille and Four go out on a date and eventually fall in love. This love affair comes to an abrupt halt when Four is trapped in an explosion while helping Camille to launch into space.

After rejoining the *Ahgama* and a brief skirmish with the Titans, Camille is assigned the Zeta Gundam. Once again Camille is plagued by Jerid Mesa, who has sworn to kill Camille. The AEUG also faces new threats, such as new Titans recruit Sara Zabiarov, the scheming Paptimus Scirocco, Jerid's girlfriend Maure Faraoh, and the new pilot of the ORX-005 Gaplant, the vicious and ruthless Yazan Gable.

EPISODE #26
"Jion's Ghost"

Alexandria is returning to Gripps after the failed attack on Granada. On board, Yazan complains that their action failed because of stupid mistakes, and now they must return shamefully. After arguing with Jamaican, he convinces Sgt. Major Adoru that the way to win is to lure the enemy in close, where the firepower of *Alexandria* can be utilized. This will also teach Jamaican the real meaning of "fear in battle," says Yazan.

EPISODES 26-30



On *Radish*, Henken questions Emma on the condition of the G-Defenser. She confirms its readiness, then laughingly refuses his offer of tea. She leaves the bridge amid jokes by the crew on Henken's poor timing.

As Bright sits aboard *Ahgama*'s bridge observing *Dogoth-Gear*, Camille arrives with a report on Zeta's maintenance. He remarks at the great psychic "pressure" emanating from the *Dogoth-Gear*. Bright replies that Quattro had mentioned the same thing. He then sends Camille off for some rest.

When Yazan and Adoru attack, Emma launches in the Mk-II to defend the *Radish* and Katsu, not wanting to be left behind, follows in the G-Defenser.

Yazan immediately attacks the Mk-II, searching for "the kid who flew the Gundam Mk-II," [Camille] and is surprised to hear a woman's voice over the radio. Katsu inadvertently activates a flare while trying to find the weapon controls. The hulk of an ancient Jion ship, of the *Gwajin* class becomes illuminated, as well as the surrounding area. Katsu and Emma try to link and form the Super Gundam, but are hampered by the pressure of their foe's attack.

On the *Ahgama*, Camille suddenly wakes from what he thought was a dream--but it's no dream, Emma is in danger. He abruptly requests permission to launch and after he departs, Bright ponders how much like Amuro Rey he is. "You feel something we cannot know," says Bright thoughtfully.

Camille arrives in time to save Emma and is recognized by Yazan, who promptly redoubles his attack. Emma joins with Katsu to form the Super Gundam, leaving Katsu with the core fighter. Katsu manages to disable Adoru's Hi-Zack but sustains damage. Both Katsu and Adoru land on the *Gwajin*. Emma, who sees their empty mecha, calls for a Nemo to watch over the Mk-II and follows on foot into the *Gwajin*.

Camille and Yazan continue their battle inside the wreck. Yazan taunts Camille that AEUG is made up of women and children. Camille responds angrily that the Titans' actions have made it so.

Adoru is killed in an explosion. Emma and Katsu leave in pursuit of Camille.

Katsu hotwires a wrecked mobile suit and fires a blast to distract Yazan in the Gaplant. Katsu is stunned in the blast. Camille prepares to exit Zeta Gundam to help him, but not before Emma arrives and tells Camille to keep fighting. With the odds turning against him, Yazan retreats. Camille heads back, waiting for the Super Gundam as the battle rages outside. Emma berates him for his incaution and goes in pursuit of Yazan, who allows her to tail him...back to *Alexandria*. "That's a good kid," he coaxes as she draws nearer. "Catch up to me."

Emma fires at Yazan, but he executes a swift dodge and the shot hits *Alexandria*'s brige instead. "This *is* a battlefield, isn't it," says Yazan, smiling grimly, as Jamaican dies in the resulting explosion.

On the way back to their respective ships, Emma apologizes to Camille for criticizing him earlier. Camille doesn't mind, and thanks Katsu for his help.

"You say that now," says Katsu, "but you'll bawl me out later!"

"That's not our job," says Emma with a smile.

EPISODE # 27
"Char's Return"

Camille and Fa are fighting again; "recreation time" as the crew of *Ahgama* have affectionately dubbed it. Camille stalks off angrily, and runs into Apori, who asks him what's wrong. "There's nothing wrong with a little recreation now and then," says Apori.

"Every time I try to talk to Fa, we start fighting! Why is that?"

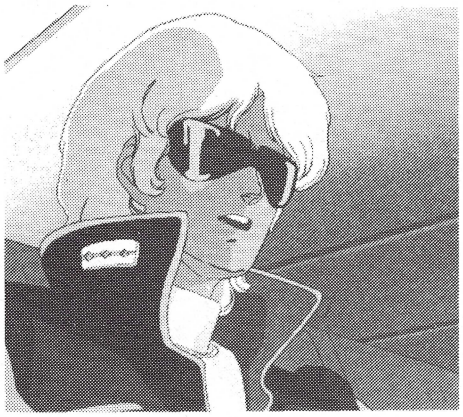
"You can only suffer this prob-

lem when you're young," jokes Apori, "so you'd better enjoy it while you can!" He leaves quickly but still shows up late for a briefing, where he tells Bright that the mecha is fine but the pilots are a problem.

On *Alexandria*, the bridge has been repaired and a new commander, Gadi Kinzei, appointed. Jerid and Maure enjoy a tender moment before the next battle. Maure tells Jerid how happy she was to be transferred near him.

"I won't die," says Maure, "because you'll always protect me."

On the planet below, Quattro prepares to leave for space. Accompanying Quattro are two children named Shinta and Qumu. Kobayashi, captain of *Audomura*,



asks Quattro to be careful--with Blex's death, Quattro is leader of AEUG now. He passes a letter for Bright Noah into Quattro's care just before the shuttle launches.

Once in orbit the shuttle pilots refuse to approach the scene of Yazan's mobile suit squadron attacking *Radish*. Quattro and the two children leave in a lifeboat.

Jerid closes in on *Ahgama*, leaving Sara and Maure behind with the Megabazooka Launcher. Since the cannon has only one shot, they must make it count. Their target--Zeta Gundam.

In the course of battle Yazan has cornered Emma, but is called away to join the attack on *Ahgama*. Emma has no time to consider the situation, as Katsu "feels" Sara searching for Zeta and so asks Emma to help Camille.

Camille's "sixth sense" warns him of Sara's threat, but Yazan's quick attack distracts him. Emma and Katsu arrive on the scene as Jerid gives the order to fire. Making contact with Sara again, Katsu screams, "Don't shoot!" Sara hesitates before firing, giving Camille and Yazan a chance to scramble and avoid the massive energy bolt. Although the hapless shuttle (which had unfortunately found itself in the path of the blast) is destroyed, Quattro and the children safely reach *Ahgama*.

Afterwards, Camille and Fa make up while Quattro teases Bright about his grey hairs.

"I can't act as Camille's father," grumbles Bright.

"Camille doesn't need a father anymore," says Quattro. "Here's something from your own kids." He hands over the letter from a family Bright hasn't seen in several months.

EPISODE #28
"Infiltrating *Jupitoris*"

Because he returned from Earth alone, Henken and Bright question Quattro about Blex. He informs them of the death, adding that this is war and that there is still work to be done.

In maintenance, Astonauge is preparing a replica of a Gelgoog for Reccoa's mission--infiltration of the *Jupitoris*. Camille tries to dissuade her from this course of action because of the danger but she is adamant. It is her duty, she says, and she's going. Camille continues to worry, knowing the risks of this mission outweigh Jaburo [where Camille had to rescue her]. He asks Fa to talk her out of going.

The plan backfires. Fa loudly and resolutely takes Reccoa's side, realizing Reccoa's determination to succeed with *Jupitoris* as recompense for her failure at Jaburo.

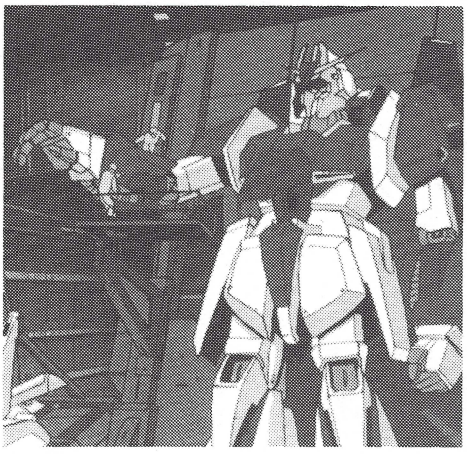
At *Jupitoris*, Scirocco philosophizes to Sara about man's place in space and the importance of finding a region or world where the spacenoids can live completely free of Earth's influence.

Back at *Ahgama*, Camille reminds Reccoa as she makes launch preparations that he will follow in the Zeta Gundam. "But remember," says Reccoa sternly, "I'm going into *Jupitoris* alone."

Fa is concerned that Camille will be going as backup to Reccoa, because she thinks it reflects poorly on Reccoa's competence. Bright, who notices her unease, sends her along to make sure Camille doesn't interfere unless it's absolutely necessary. Henken and Quattro leave for *Radish*.

Reccoa penetrates the interior of the massive *Jupitoris* with ease. As Camille watches, he's suddenly attacked by Sara in the Messala. Inside, Reccoa eludes her chaperone. She arrives at one of the hangar bays and is promptly spotted by Scirocco, who tauntingly asks her name, where she's from, and then wishes her a good trip home...*if* she can get home.

Outside, Sara presses Camille strongly until Fa appears. Scirocco is able to sense the presence of Zeta Gundam outside, but also senses Sara's request to let her



handle Zeta alone. Scirocco complies and gives the order.

Reccoa contrives her escape. When the opening of a mobile suit hatch is reported to Scirocco, he smiles. "I think I'm beginning to like that woman," he muses.

Sara reports to Scirocco a psychic "pressure" from Camille that was different from Scirocco's own--it overpowered her. Scirocco tells her to rest for the next mission. The fight was not important, he says, as long as she's safe.

On *Ahgama*, Reccoa recreates the interior plans of *Jupitoris*, as was her original mission. She does not, however, include the place where Scirocco was, and neglects to report her meeting with him. As for why, she doesn't know...yet.

EPISODE #29
"Crisis at Side 2"

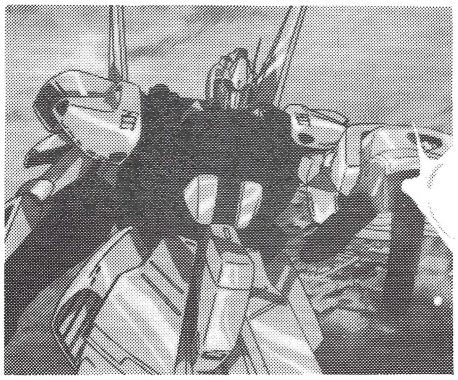
Quattro goes to a meeting at Von Braun City as Bright Noah receives information that the Titans are about to attack colonies at Side 2 with what they suspect is G-3 poison gas [responsible for the deaths of *34-36 million* people during the infamous "30 Bunch" incident].

Camille notes that Fa hasn't appeared on the mobile suit deck and goes to find her. Shinta and Qumu come racing out of Fa's quarters, Shinta completely naked. The two children are circling Camille, laughing and yelling, when Fa comes running after them--not wearing much more than Shinta. Camille expresses his belief in her potential as a pilot, and is rewarded with an abruptly closed door for his efforts.

At a briefing on *Alexandria*, Jerid explains the details of the Side 2 operation. Yazan tries to join the meeting but is rebuffed by the other Titans, who cite his past uncooperative attitude. Maure asks if using poison gas isn't against the space treaties. Jerid says yes, but sees no other alternative.

The mayor of the Side 2 colonies has little faith in AEUG and refuses to wait for *Ahgama*'s assistance. Viewing the destruction of an AEUG ship by *Alexandria* only hastens his desire to surrender to the Titans. The Titans, however, pretend that Minovski particles keep them from receiving the transmission so they can make an example of the Side 2 colonies.

Ahgama detects a communication between the mayor and *Alexandria*, and suspect a traitor. Bright orders Zeta Gundam and



Reccoa in Methuss to launch, with other mobile suits on standby. On the way to the battle Camille destroys the dummy asteroid behind which *Alexandria* was hiding. The battle begins in earnest. *Ahgama* and *Radish* launch additional mobile suits. As usual, Jerid singles out Camille. "If it weren't for you," Jerid shouts, "I wouldn't have to do such awful missions!" The battle intensifies.

Katsu in Nemo is able to destroy the cannisters of gas adhered to one of the colonies. Emma orders Katsu to look for Camille.

Maure enters the fray, saying that she won't let Camille kill Jerid. She manages to embrace Zeta Gundam with Gabthley, aims all her weaponry at Zeta and is prepared to die with Camille--but Katsu arrives in time and forces the two to separate.

Afterward in *Ahgama*'s locker room, a shaky Camille is asked if he's OK. "I came close to dying," Camille says softly. Fa enters the room searching for Shinta and Qumu, who are hiding out in an empty normal suit. Apori comments that he's going to the colony as Bright's bodyguard. Camille volunteers to go with him.

When *Ahgama* arrives at the capital colony of Side 2, Bright questions the mayor about the intercepted signal. The mayor lies, saying a traitor attempted it. Although Bright realizes that the mayor is lying, he chooses not to confront him and reminds him that temporary peace gained by surrender can only hurt the colonists in the long run.

EPISODE #30
"Jerid's Personal Attack"

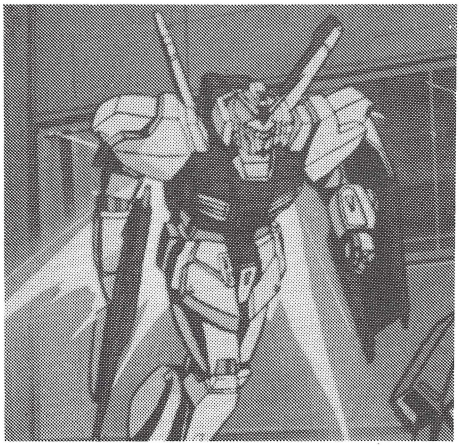
Quattro meets with Won Li in Anman, discussing Axcis. Won dislikes the defensive role AEUG is playing. Quattro reminds him that they don't wish to give the people the impression that AEUG is synonymous with riot and chaos.

Melani Hugh Carbine of Anaheim Electronics joins the meeting. He suggests that Quattro be sent to make contact with Axcis and find out what they're up to. Quattro agrees, *if* he can use *Ahgama*. Won Li goes to call the ship.

At *Alexandria*, Jerid and Maure are informed that while Yazan will be leading the upcoming attack, the real responsibility will be Jerid's. Later, Jerid explains to Maure that his only desire is to strike against *Ahgama* and destroy Zeta Gundam. As Jerid is from Earth, he views the colonists as lesser beings and finds his continual defeat at the hands of Camille humiliating. Maure reminds him that she's "always behind" him and leaves for the battle.

Jerid and Maure hide near an abandoned colony whle Yazan begins an attack. Under fire from *Alexandria*, *Ahgama* is forced to take cover in the colony...and Jerid and Maure spring their ambush. *Ahgama* sustains heavy damage by the time Camille and

Fa break away from the conflict and make it to the ship. Emma also returns, protecting the bridge while Camille battles Jerid and Maure. Fa, sensing danger to Shinta and Qumu, leaves her mobile suit to return to *Ahgama* and find them. Camille realizes that Fa will soon be in danger. Fa senses his warning, but she cannot react quickly enough to avoid injury.



Camille is double-teamed by Jerid and Maure's Gabthleys as he tries to fall back to the ship. He is finally able to target a shot on Jerid--but Maure interposes her suit and cries, "I told you I would always protect you!" Maure dies.

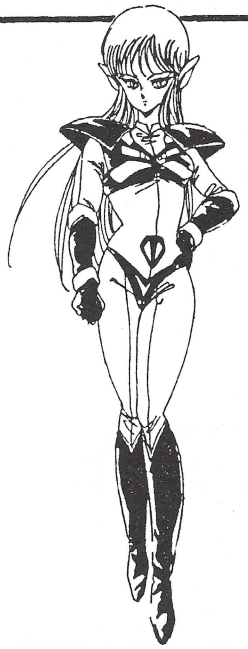
Jerid goes berzerk and comes screaming after Camille. "You! Why is it always you?!" Jerid's Gabthley is disabled and suddenly he finds himself "somewhere else," where he can hear and see the recently deceased Maure.

She tells him that he is capable of bringing the universe to its proper path. "Live and fight on!" she implores. "Those are the best things for you to do."

"I don't care about that," he cries. "You're not here!" She begins to fade away, inspiring him to one last desperate charge against *Ahgama*, but his mobile suit is crippled and he must retreat.

After the battle, Emma tells Bright not to punish Fa for leaving her suit in the midst of battle because it won't help. "You mean it's a matter of the pilot's temperament?" asks Bright. Emma responds that it's up to his discretion. Bright restrains himself to thanking Fa for protecting the children and the residence sector. As they gather around each other, Camille wanders off to the side and says, "But I've seen it--there are no tears for the dead." ■

LASERDISCS



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Questions & Answers

Answers to a few of the questions asked by our readers.

Q: I was watching *Hokuto No Ken* and Toki had been dubbed the "Miracle Man" or worker or something of that nature, except he had turned evil and was killing people left and right. I thought he was the peaceful one. Please explain this.
A: There was a time during the *Hokuto no Ken* series that Amoeba masqueraded as Toki. It was Amoeba, of course, who was the evil killer.

Q: What does the title *Megazone 23* mean?
A: *Megazone 23* is the name of the space ship in which the story takes place. It also refers to the twenty-three wards, or "zones," of the mega-city of Tokyo.

Q: Will we ever get to see a comic strip in *Animag* similar to the ones in *Newtype*? Also, I read in your third issue that you were going to be featuring Mamoru Nagano's *Five Star Stories*. When will we be able to see this?
A: We're considering a manga-type comic for the future, but as of now, the idea is still in the development stage. We'll keep you posted on the details.
...Speaking of *Five Star Stories*. *Animag* will feature an article next issue on the story that's taken the model circuit by storm.

Q: Do you plan to offer animation soundtracks, manga and OAVs for sale?
A: We have no plans to branch into merchandising.

Q: Would *Animag* think about featuring more explicit adult animation, such as *Rall II*?
A: Think about it? Sure, we'll think about it. Just as soon as we do the all-*etchi* [mild lechery] issue. We'll even feature a *Cream Lemon* centerfold. [Why does this question keep coming up?]

Q: What are the five most popular Japanese animated features?
A: We'll do you five better. In order of popularity, here are the ten most popular animated features as reported by our readers: *Robotech* [English-language version], *Super-Dimension Fortress Macross* [original Japanese version], *Dirty Pair*, *Urusei Yatsura*, *Uchuu Kaizoku Captain Harlock*, *City Hunter*, *Hokuto no Ken*, *Lupin the Third*, *Star Blazers*, and *Maison Ikkoku*.

Q: How does Admiral Okita come back to life in *Final Yamato?*

A: He doesn't come back to life because he was never really dead. Although he was presumed dead due to radiation sickness at the end of *Uchuu Senkan Yamato* (Space Battleship Yamato), doctors were able to sustain him on long-term life support, and finally able to revive him with new technology during *Final Yamato*.

Q: What is Haruhiko Mikimoto (*Macross*, *Orgussė*) currently working on?
A: *Salamander*, an OAV released earlier this year, featured Mikimoto character designs. Most recently, Mikimoto did the character designs for the science fiction video *Gunbuster*.

Q: Why doesn't *Animag* cover more fan activities, such as clubs and newsletters?
A: Our goal is to create a technically accurate reference source for animation. Although many of our readers belong to fan clubs, we don't feel that it would be fair to cover activities that would appeal to only a limited segment of our readership. Also, there is a matter of timeliness. An article on *Gundam*, for example, will be as useful a year from now as it is today.

Q: Everyone else in *Zeta Gundam* generally seems to get a new mobile suit to pilot somewhere along the way. Why does Char keep the Hyaku Shiki until the end of the series?
A: One of the traits of newtypes is an affinity with machines. Often, the longer a pilot works with a particular mobile suit, the better the rapport. Although no one knows for sure if this is the exact reason Char keeps the Hyaku Shiki, it may have something to do with it.

Q: Why is it so hard for me to obtain *Animag*?
A: *Animag* is currently handled through all the major comic distributors in the U.S., such as Diamond and Capital City, in addition to several magazine distributors and Books Nippan. If you are unable to find *Animag*, please talk to your local comics shop and ask them to order it for you. How will your comics shop know that you'd like to read *Animag* if you don't tell them?

Q: Why does the story in the *Dominion* video have nothing to do with the story in the manga?
A: The video is a prequel to the manga, explaining the origins of the characters and situations that occur.

Have a question about your favorite animation show? Animag welcomes questions of interest to our readers. Send all correspondence c/o **Questions and Answers**.

MECHA FILE

A Continuing Series on the Mechanics and Robots of Japanese Animation

BY JAMES TEAL

The Psychomuu system and its use in mobile suit developement.

Psychommu System

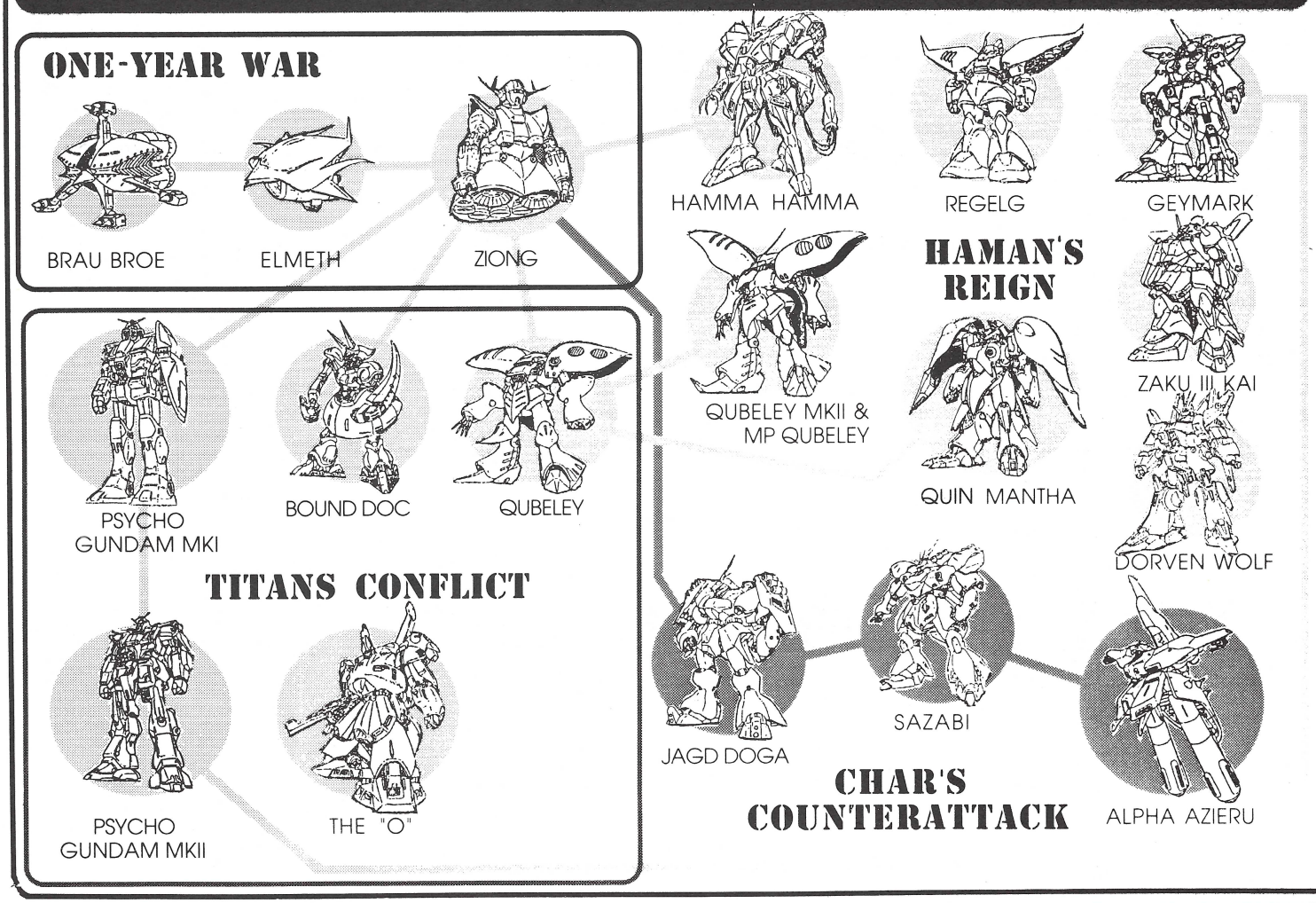
Of the many different technical advancements in mobile suit history, the development of the Psychommu system is one of the most pronounced. The word "Psychommu" is an abbreviation for "psychic communicator." The Psychommu system is a telepathically operated control system. This system was developed by the Jion military during the One-Year War. Under the effects of Minovski physics, the Psychommu system makes remote control possible. To utilize this advantage, it is necessary for the pilot to be a newtype.

The Minovski field jams and disrupts radio waves; therefore, an alternate form of communication became necessary to send commands to any remote controlled units. The Psychommu system amplifies a newtype's telepathic emanations and relays them to the appropriate remote control units.

One of the side effects of the Psychommu system is that it generally enhances other newtype abilities in addition to telepathy. This led to the installation of the Psychommu system into mobile suits and mobile armors without remote-controlled weaponry. Telepathically broadcasting commands through the Psychommu system is obviously much faster than fumbling with manual controls. This effectively gives the pilot a much quicker reaction time, augmenting the mobile suit's performance overall.

An offshoot of the Psychommu system is the BioSensor. Instead of waiting for telepathic input, the BioSensor actually reads the pilot's thoughts, sometimes down to a subconscious level, and translates them into action. Remote

PSYCHOMMU-EQUIPPED MOBILE SUITS



control weaponry is a tremendous advantage in the *Gundam* world. With the absence of radar, everything must be spotted by sight. The remote control units employed by mobile suits and armors are relatively small by comparison. This size difference makes it nearly impossible to spot them with available sensory array. Most Psychommu-controlled weaponry can only be detected by another newtype. The newtype being targeted is able to pick up the telepathic commands being broadcasted and can act accordingly (many "oldtype" pilots fall prey to Psychommu weapons, never knowing what hit them). Another advantage to Psychommu weapons is that theoretically, they have an unlimited range. The remote control units can operate at great distances and still respond instantly to commands.

The Brau-Broe, Elmeth and Ziong were the first Psychommu mobile armors built by the Jion military. Seven years later the Qubeley, the first mobile suit equipped with a Psychommu system, was constructed by the Axcis. The Zeta Gundam and The "O" were the only mobile suits ever outfitted with the BioSensor system.

Other mobile suits utilizing a Psychommu system were the Psycho Gundam, Psycho Gundam Mk-II, Hamma-Hamma, Regelg, Zaku III Kai, Dorven Wolf, Geymark, mass-produced Qubeley, Quin Mantha, Re-GZ, Jagd Doga, Sazabi, and the Alpha Ajiel. The Nu Gundam was built with the first Psycho-Frame (the further development of the Psychommu system led to the construction of the Psycho-Frame, which will be covered in a future issue). ■

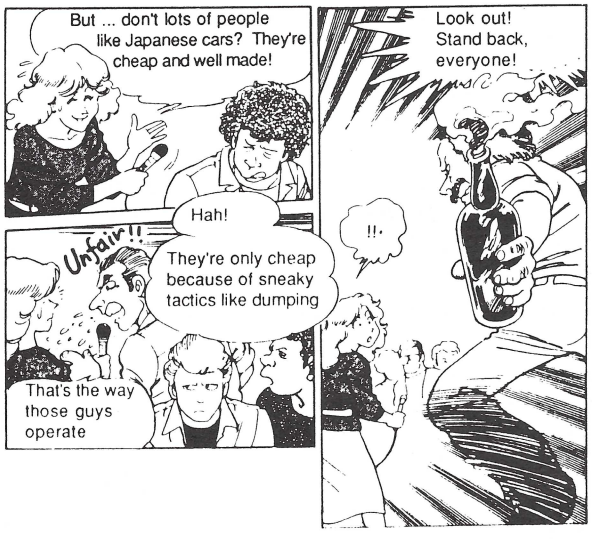
JAPAN INC.

Published by University of California, written by Shotaro Ishinomori with an introduction by Peter Duus. Translated by Betsey Scheiner. Contains over 300 black-and-white comic strips; 313 pages.

It's probably not an exaggeration to say that the Japanese read more comic magazines (manga) than any other culture. Circulation figures are astounding; at one point, one magazine had a biweekly circulation of nearly four million!

Name a topic and you will probably find manga devoted to it. There is action and adventure for boys, starry-eyed romance for girls, "blue" manga for adults, and even sports themes such as golf, baseball and mah-jongg. It should come as no surprise to find manga dedicated to educational purposes. This is what *Japan, Inc.* is all about.

Japan, Inc. is an adaptation of an economics textbook used in Japan. By putting a hypothetical company into a hypothetical situation, the book offers insight into the Japanese view of their own economy and how it reacts to outside events.



The setting is the fictional trading company Mitsumoto, Inc., a representative Japanese company. The characters are employees of Mitsumoto. There is no single main character, and the reader may find himself sympathizing with some characters more than others. Whereas Kudo the thoughtful idealist sympathizes with the working classes and stands for honesty and social responsibility, Tsugawa is an amoral profit maximizer who thinks only of his own career. Kudo and Tsugawa's senior counterparts, Toda and Akiyama, are also featured. Amamiya, Office Lady and Ueda, an assistant fresh from the contryside, balance the cast of characters. The book features facts about Japan's economy, appropriate to the topic, at the bottom of each page.

In six segments the book covers topics such as trade friction with the United States, the rising value of the yen, rising oil prices, financing government debt through the issue of bonds, internationalization of business, and the adjustment of domestic markets to changing consumer tastes. *Japan, Inc.* reveals a Japan quite unlike the monolithic superpower depicted in the Western press.

Not for children (unless they're well versed in economics), *Japan Inc.* is a funny, perceptive and thought-provoking introduction to the complex issues facing Japan's new global economy.

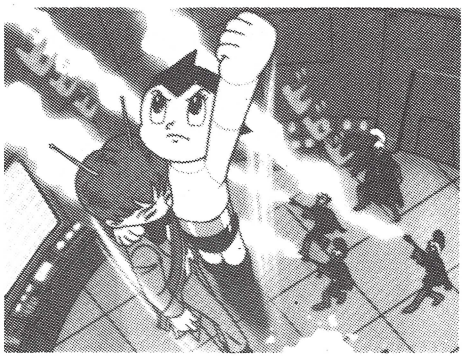
ROBOT ICONS OF POPULAR CULTURE

by Frederik L. Schodt

Science fiction robots began appearing in Japanese literature shortly after the Tokyo performance of Karel Capek's pioneering play *R.U.R.*, or *Rossum's Universal Robots* in 1924, but they did not capture the public imagination the way they did in the West. . . . In Japan, the most popular robot stories and characters have been visual and, instead of novels, have emerged mainly from post-war comics and animation. As a result they have also had far greater influence. Several robot characters created . . . have become icons of popular culture. Since 1963 more than one hundred serialized robot animated shows for television (not to mention theatres) have been produced.

One of the first pre-war "robot" characters in Japan was Tanku Tankuro, the hero of a children's comic (with the same name) created by artist Masaki Sakamoto in 1934. A pseudorobot, Tanku's human head sat atop a cast iron body that looked like a bowling ball with eight holes. He operated on what seemed to be magic, and readers never knew what he would pull out of the holes in his body. Sometimes he waved swords or guns, at other times he sprouted wings and a propeller and transformed into an airplane or even a tank. He was drawn in a naive style and given an endearing personality, and when he fought he was always on the side of good (Japan). Often he was involved in wars, which reflected the climate of the times.

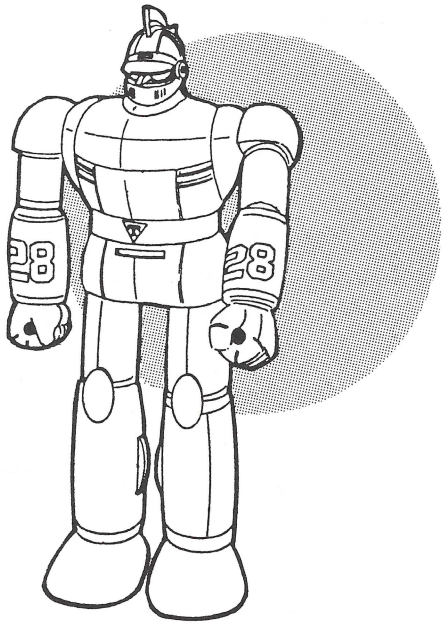
The most famous Japanese robot character of all time appeared in an utterly different social environment after World War II . . . . Tetsuwan Atom, or "Mighty Atom" as he was



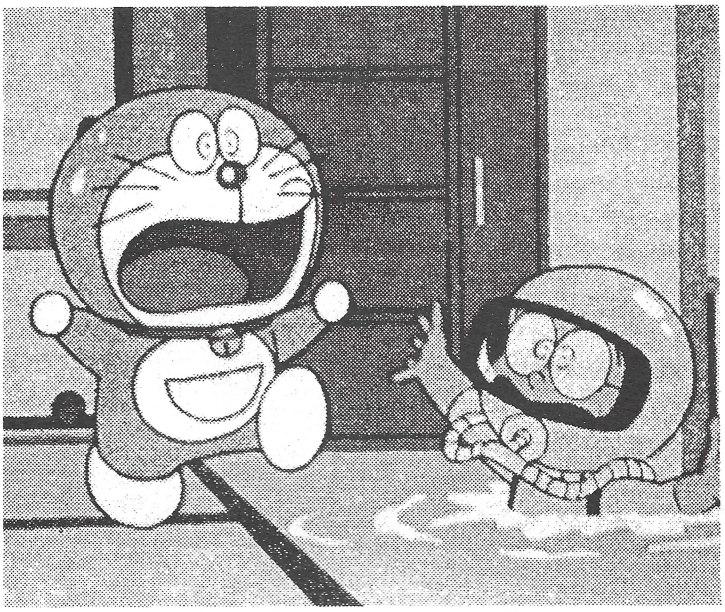
called, was created by a young medical student/artist named Osamu Tezuka in 1951. He proved so popular that he went on to be serialized for eighteen years as a comic book story, starred in Japan's first animated series for television in 1963, and was then exported under the name *Astroboy*. In his basic form (he changed slightly over the years) Atom was a little boy robot in a normal family — of other robots — who went to a normal school with real human children, but unlike them he had a nuclear reactor for a heart, a computer brain, searchlight eyes, rockets in his feet, and a machine gun in his tail. Instead of waging war, he fought monsters and bandits in the name of peace. He became one of the most popular fantasy heroes ever, and his image — that of an android robot with feelings that helped man — was permanently etched into the national consciousness. Japanese children had discovered a new hero: the machine.

In Tezuka's story, Atom was invented by a top scientist at the National Science Agency as a replacement for a son lost in a traffic accident. Later, Tezuka placed him in a family of robots who were all androids and quite normal in most respects. This had the brilliant effect of making him immediately identifiable to all the children of Japan. Atom became the little boy next door, except he lived in the future where science and technology had created a world of clever gadgets and a standard of living tht Japanese could only dream about. . . . Atom had seven special powers (sometimes the number changed), such as the ability to speak over sixty languages, but unlike the magical powers of American superheroes or earlier fantasy robots in Japan, they were based on what seemed to be scientific electro-mechanical principles. . . . Sometimes, in the story, he would be damaged or malfunction, and had to be repaired. . . .

In 1956, soon after Tezuka began drawing Atom, another artist named Mitsuteru Yokoyama created a rival series starring a robot of an entirely different nature. Called *Tetsujin 28go*, or "Iron Man No. 28," he, like Atom, could fly through the air (with rockets on his back). But he was a step back-



ward technologically. A giant metal monster (eventually "20 meters tall and weighing 25.08 tons"), his main power was his brute strength, used to kick and punch in fights. Instead of being an autonomous android endowed with artificial intelligence, he was operated by a remote-control device. Usually this was in the hands of Shotaro Kinta, a young boy "private detective" who used Iron Man to foil nefarious criminals of various sorts. If the device was stolen, Iron Man could be employed for evil ends as well. He was, in a sense, much closer to today's industrial robots than Atom. He was neither good nor bad; he was only a machine. . . .



It is hard to imagine a robot more different than the humanistic, "family-oriented" Atom, but both characters resemble each other in that they were used to help mankind, and both have competed for fans until this day. Like *Mighty Atom*, *Iron Man No. 28* was serialized for years in comic magazines, and then turned into toys, picture books, records, radio shows, and television shows, and exported to the United States (under the name *Gigantor*). Also, like *Atom*, a new animated *Iron Man* series was created and broadcast in 1980.

Atom and Iron Man are the ancestors of all subsequent Japanese fantasy robots, particularly two distinct genres seen today; truly autonomous robots and those that require human intervention for their operation. . . .

Autonomous Robots

A 1981 survey of robot animation (mostly based on stories first created in comic magazines) revealed that around 20 percent of the cartoon heroes fell into the category of autonomous robots. The most successful of these are in the tradition of Tezuka's Atom, but by extrapolating and expanding on Atom's little-pal-next-door qualities and adding humor, several artist/writers have created robots that are cuddly machines. The influence of such characters on the national psyche far outweighs their number.

Doraemon, created by comic artists Fujiko-Fujio in 1970, is an example. A cute, endearing robot cat, Doraemon lived with a young boy named Nobita in a normal family setting, having materialized in Nobita's desk drawer one day after being sent through the fourth dimension from the twenty-second century. Nobita was rather clumsy and a poor performer in school, so much so that he had created great problems for his descendants. To correct this, his great-great-grandson had sent him Doraemon, a robot cat that children of the future used as guardians. Doraemon was extremely intelligent, and always looking out for Nobita's best interests, but he was of flawed construction and prone to error. Taking a hint from Tanku Tankuro of the 1930s, the artists made him a walking toy box and gave him a kangaroo-style pouch from which he could produce exciting technological gadgets, which he would share with Nobita. This always resulted in humorous problems and proved immensely popular among young children.

Within a very short span of time Doraemon became a household word, what the Japanese call an "idol." By 1985, over fifty-five million copies of the story had been sold in paperback form; the series had been animated for television and theatre; Doraemon dolls and toys were everywhere; and the original artists were millionaires. In a land where space is at a premium, and animals have traditionally been few and far between, Doraemon symbolized a popular fantasy among Japanese young children — the little robot as "pet."

The same thing occurred with Arare-chan, a little girl android robot created by comic artist Akira Toriyama in 1980. Arare-chan, even more than Doraemon, achieved that rare status all creators of fantasy hope for — a character so popular it appeals to people of all ages and both genders. In the original story, Arare-chan was created by a slightly dingy inventor named Dr. Slump (also the title of the comic story). Arare-chan looked like any other little girl, except that she would occasionally take her head off at the wrong time and had difficulty controlling her herculean strength. Her appeal lay in her funny mistakes, her "cuteness," and the utterly zany world of her inventor. Grammar school children as well as office workers became her fans, and in one year, with the films and merchandising that followed, her twenty-seven-year-old creator earned $2.4 million.

There are, of course, scores of other autonomous gag robots, in comic magazines, animation, and cheap-special-effects TV shows. There are robot dogs, cats, birds, tape recorders, and trains — in short, something for everyone, of any age group. The most successful of these stories, however, always bring the machine into a very mundane, average Japanese environment. Because they feature a very Japanese cultural setting, and often wild, zany Japanese humor which includes puns, scatology and eroticism, they are the genre least well-known outside of Japan.

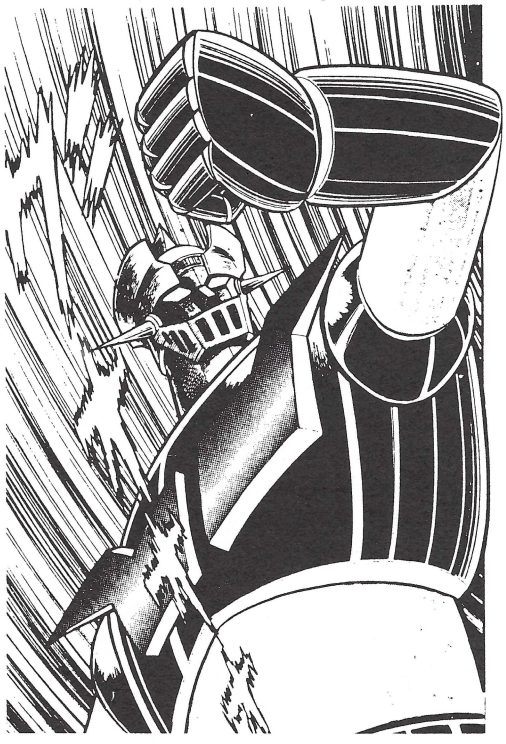
The Man-Robot Symbiosis

The most famous, original, and prolific type of fantasy robot character in Japan is the giant warrior robot. The vast majority of these are the

descendants of *Iron Man No. 28*, and require human intervention for their operation. The 1982 survey of robot animation shows that 73 percent of all works created at one time fell into this category.

The first major step in the evolution of the giant warrior robot genre after *Iron Man No. 28* was taken by Go Nagai, an artist raised on both it and Atom. Nagai had a reputation of being a "bad boy" in the industry. In 1968 he had scandalized the country by drawing erotic comedies for children's comics (although by today's standards his stories would be tame). In 1969 he began developing a new robot series called *Mazinger Z*. "All the robot comics," he says, "were either like Atom — humanoid — or like Iron Man No. 28 — remote-controlled. I wanted to create something different, and I thought it would be interesting to have a robot that you could drive, like a car."

In Nagai's tale, a young hero named Koji Kabuto piloted a type of hovercraft, which docks in the head of a giant robot, and serves as a cockpit from which to control it. Like many other robot works, the plot revolved around fights, in this case between Mazinger Z and an assortment of monsters and evil robots, usually created by an archenemy named Dr. Hell. But the man-robot symbiosis that Mazinger Z symbolized helped solve an old problem in robot fiction — the problem of personifying the machine while still preserving its machine identity. When the robot became, like a car, a machine that could be jumped in and driven, it had a powerful appeal to young boys. When animated, and when toy companies began issuing faithful reproductions, *Mazinger Z* became a smash hit.



"Mazinger Z," says Go, "comes from the Japanese word *majin*, or "genie." The basic concept was of a machine that can be used for either good or evil, that when the human will is transferred to it, becomes even more powerful than a human." Go admits that when a child he liked the scenes in Tezuka's series where Atom destroyed the evil, big robots. "Atom basically follows [science fiction author Isaac] Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics," he says. "Mazinger Z inherited Atom's destructive power — he is basically a type of tank."

Nagai went on to create innumerable robot stories, most of which were animated for television, and he made one other major contribution to the warrior robot genre in 1974. "The toy companies," he recalls, "said they needed more characters in each story so they could sell more toys, so I complied by creating a series called *Getta Robotto*, where one hero robot disassembled into three smaller ones." This was the start of "combining robots."

There remained one element to finalize the giant warrior robot genre — *henshin*, or transformation, a popular ingredient in Japanese fantasy. . . . In the comics, Shotaro Ishimori, in particular, had created many popular characters in the 1960s and 1970s who switched from one form to another, and often they were robots. *Jinzo Ningen Kikaida* ("Kikaida, the Artificial Man"), a series created in 1968, was an example. The hero, whose name was a contraction of *kikai* ("machine") and *raida* ("rider"), was a bell-bottomed young man who rode a slightly futuristic motorcycle with a guitar slung over his back. When danger threatened, he would touch both shoulders and activate a switch that transformed him into his fighting robot identity. Like many of Ishimori's stories, instead of being animated, *Kikaida* was produced as a live-action, special-effects series on television, part of a huge genre where actors in rubber suits portraying good robots battle other actors in rubber suits portraying bad robots. In these films, transformation based on "mechanical principles" is obviously difficult and is therefore preceeded by a ritual movement or dance, or by flashing lights and explosions. Often the robots are humanoids.

Because transformation is infinitely easier to depict in animation than live-action, artists have had a field day. Ever since *Yusha Raideen* ("Brave Raideen") in 1975 changed into a fighter plane called "God Bird," giant warrior robots have been folding, combining, and disassembling in increasingly complex and ridiculous patterns, into cars, robot lions, fighter planes, and trucks, with the toy companies struggling valiantly to keep up and reproduce them in three dimensions. Even the human-robot interface is varied. Some robots are "driven" by joysticks, some have steering wheels, some are operated by telepathy from inside the cockpit or remotely, and some are driven by amplifying the muscle movements of the human driver.

* * * *

By and large, the plots of giant warrior shows adhere to a simple formula. A young boy is leading a normal life, going to school or playing

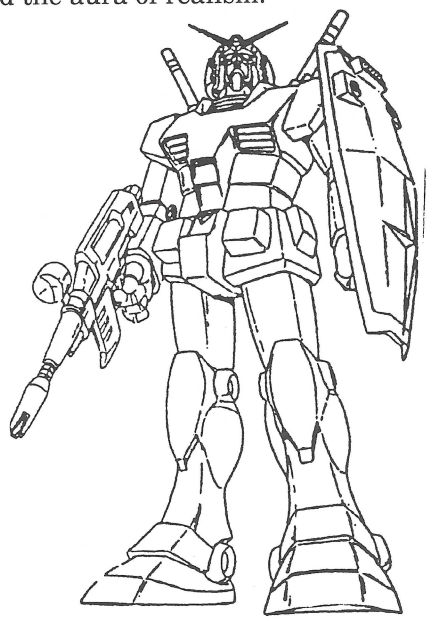
Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics

The First Law of Robotics: "A robot may not injure a human being, or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm." The Second Law: "A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law." The Third Law: "A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law."

with his friends, when giant robots or alien monsters attack, threatening destruction of the world, or at the very least, Japan. Usually the boy's parents are killed, but before dying his father (sometimes his uncle), who is a top scientist, hands him the keys (or blueprints) to a secret weapon he has been building — a giant robot more powerful and technologically sophisticated than anything else. Then the hero gets in his robot, and the plot degenerates into fights between robots and monsters, with a young girl and a few cute little animals or "mascot" robots thrown in as a softener. In the end the world is saved. At their worst, giant warrior robot shows are thirty-minute toy commercials, filled with explosions and fight scenes; as industry personnel lament, they are a "synonym for bad taste."

Increasingly, production companies that specialize in robot animation work directly with toy companies. They rely on directors who are masters of the genre rather than simply animating existing stories created by artists in comic magazines. The challenge for these directors is to devise an original idea within the constraints of the medium. After years of laboring without recognition, a couple have actually become minor celebrities in Japan. But it wasn't easy. . . .

In 1979 — still adhering to the essential formula — robot animation director Yoshiyuki Tomino created the TV series *Mobile Suit Gundam*, by far the most influential show in recent years. Whereas most television robot shows had degenerated into hyped battles between sword-wielding machines 30 stories high that tromped through cities and slugged it out with their opponents with karate chops, Tomino took a different tack. He called his robots, not robots, but mobile suits, and he (temporarily) abandoned combining and transforming techniques that defied the laws of physics. These robots were weapons, developed and used by a distant colony in revolt against the forces of Earth, a grand *Star Wars*-type of conflict in outer space. . . . The difference between *Gundam* and others was in the level of mechanical detail and the aura of realism.



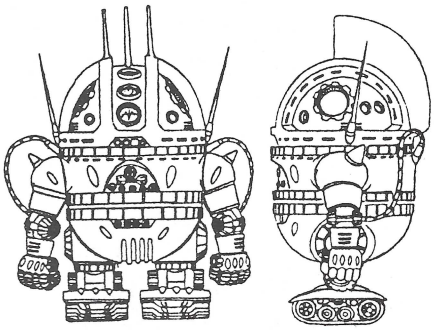
To rationalize the idea of huge machines fighting in close quarters, Tomino postulated that something called "Minovski particles" had rendered radar inoperable. Additionally, he worked to blur the traditional conflict between good and evil; the humans he depicted had complex characters with both good and bad traits, and heroes as well as enemies sometimes died. To audiences raised on lesser fare, it was shockingly believable.

Tomino thereafter went on to make *Gundam* a national institution. Over the next eight years he created not only *Mobile Suit Gundam*, but *Mobile Suit Z* [Zeta] *Gundam*, and *Mobile Suit Gundam ZZ* [Double Zeta]. In the Japanese tradition, the shows were also, of course, accompanied by feature films, comics, novels, records, toys, stationary, and books lavishly detailing the *mecha* or mechanisms inside the various robots.

Nihon Sunrise [currently known as Sunrise] has subsequently made a virtual trademark out of fairly "serious" giant warrior robot animation. But *Gundam* has been a hard act to follow. "Tomino's realism created problems for us," jokes Takeyuki Kanda, another successful robot show director for the company, "because now when a robot runs out of energy it's like a car without gas, and just a piece of machinery." Kanda tries to distinguish his films by stressing young heroes who are victims, caught up in wars created by their elders; his robots are armor, or protection, in which he emphasizes beauty in function and shape.

Ryosuke Takahashi, the director responsible for *Layzner* and other popular shows, stresses highly realistic robots of limited function. He took construction equipment as an inspiration. . . . He feels that robots have aided his creativity. "The robot world we portray doesn't really exist yet," he says, "but it seems as though it could if science keeps progressing. The unknown variables are a stimulus to young people's imagination; we use the robots as a bridge to a fantasy world."

As with all the other myriad fantasy robots that exist in Japan, warrior robots have only helped to promote acceptance of machines and technology. Says Eiji Yamaura, senior vice president of Sunrise, "Japan has a long history of robot shows, and the robots themselves sometimes appear as enemies, sometimes as friends. But the basic concept of a robot was formed with Atom — a robot is fundamentally a friend, and, as in Asimov's Laws of Robotics, will not harm us.



[This article was excerpted from Frederik L. Schodt's new book, ***Inside the Robot Kingdom: Japan, Mechatronics, and the Coming Robotopia***, available at bookstores, or from Kodansha International, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, New York 10022 (telephone: 212-207-7050). ISBN 0-87011-845-4. $19.95.]

CITY HUNTER

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

City Hunter is an animated television series as well as a long-running weekly comic series written and drawn by Tsukasa Hojo in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. Tsukasa Hojo's previous comic work, *Cat's Eye*, was also a tremendous success in both manga and animated form. Tsukasa's work is unique in that he uses both comical and serious art and story telling to create an enjoyable balance of comedy and hard-boiled realist action. For the most part, the story line for the television series is identical to the manga, except for scenes too risque for television audiences.

THE STORY

City Hunter revolves around Ryo Saeba, private investigator/gun-for-hire, and his partner, Kaori Makimura. Writing the letters "XYZ" on a public bulletin board at Shinjuku Station in Tokyo is the only way to solicit City Hunter's help. (Just as the letters "XYZ" are at the end, so is the person desperate enough to petition. The applicant must be interviewed by Kaori before City Hunter will accept the case.)

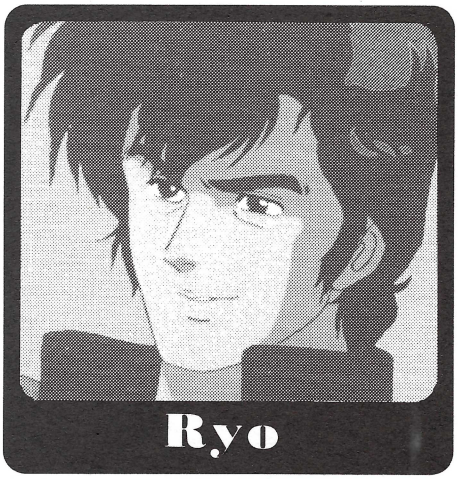
The adventures of City Hunter are presented in an episodic format, with each story essentially being complete unto itself with occasional tie-ins to previous adventures. A typical job for Ryo varies from professional body guard, school teacher, gun-for-hire, live-in maid, private investigator, and when necessary, executioner. But no matter what the job, there is always some sort of danger and probably a pretty girl involved.

THE CAST

Ryo Saeba

As the "City Hunter," Ryo is suave, debonair, cool under pressure and a crack shot. Ryo's non-business personality, however, is not nearly so polished. He is often silly, rude, and some might consider his middle name to be *sukebe* [wolf, lecher].

Armed with his favorite weapon, a Colt .357 Python, Ryo's special talent as a marksman supreme becomes obvious. In the past, Ryo has shot through a moving train in order to save Kaori from an assassin holding her at gunpoint. The unfortunate assassin was standing on a platform on the other side of the tracks at the time. He has also shot through a crowded



Ryo

park and ballistically excised the belt of a man trying to pick up a young girl. As the belt shatters without harm to the man, the girl screams and Ryo's astonished client says, "You've got the job."

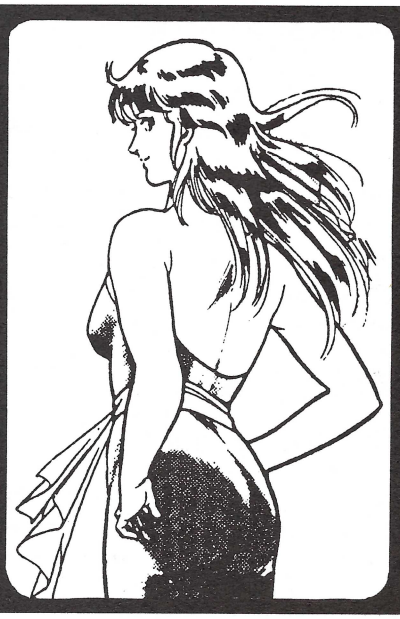
City Hunter prefers to take cases pertaining to women. On dangerous cases, Ryo often has his female clients stay at his apartment--for their own protection, of course.

Unfortunately, no one can protect Ryo from Kaori's giant ten-ton hammer. The hammer is used as a sight gag whenever Ryo's *sukebe* tendencies get out of hand. Although Ryo flirts with his clients, he rarely takes action, at least until the case is closed. This is only partly due to Kaori's influence; mainly, it is Ryo's strong sense of duty

HOJO'S CAT'S EYE

Cat's Eye, Tsukasa Hojo's earlier work, revolves around three lovely girls, Hitomi, Rui, and Ai, who overtly run a coffee house but covertly, are the infamous art thieves--Cat's Eye. To the police and especially to officer Toshio Utsumi, Hitomi's boyfriend (the Hitomi-Toshio relationship is one of the story's subplots), the Cat's Eye trio are just thieves who steal valuable art. For Toshio, catching Cat's Eye is almost an obsession. As the story progresses, the true intent of Cat's Eye is revealed--to recover the collections of art originally painted by their father, now on the market due to the machinations of an international syndicate. Their goal is also to find their father, now in hiding from the syndicate.

Cat's Eye is more serious in its overall story line and has less of the *City Hunter*-style sight gags, such as the 100-ton mallet and the abundance of sexual jokes, but compensates with a more serious, complex story line, more character development and plenty of action, and is equally enjoyable as *City Hunter*.



Kaori

Kaori Makimura

Kaori Makimura is the sister of Ryo's deceased partner, Makimura. Makimura had intended to tell Kaori on her twentieth birthday that she was not his blood sister, that she'd been adopted, but he died before he could reveal the truth. Ryo keeps Makimura's secret, declining to tell her that her father was an escaped killer the senior Makimura had shot and killed. At the request of Kaori's mother, the older Makimura takes Kaori in and rears her as his own. When he eventually dies five years later in the line of duty, Ryo's partner assumes the responsibility of looking after his adopted "sister."

Sweet and innocent in appearance, Kaori has a fierce temper when crossed. Although accurate, her shooting style leaves something to be desired. She is often mistaken for a boy when in masculine attire.

Kaori tends to keep her feelings to herself. She is very fond of Ryo, but has yet to pursue a serious relationship with him.

Hiroyuki Makimura

Ryo's original partner. Hideyoshi Makimura is a streetwise, bespectacled gentleman who spends a good deal of his time keeping Ryo out of trouble. The ultimate informant, Makimura supplies Ryo with those elusive, juicy and often lethal facts that are necessary to get the

Hiroyuki

job done. It is his tenacious search for knowledge that leads to his demise at the hands of the ruthless "General." Upon his death, Makimura asks Ryo to watch over Kaori and to supervise the bequeathment of a large sum of money to her.

Saeko Nogami

Introducing Ryo's part-time love interest (much to Kaori's vexation), the sexual and athletic Saeko Nogami. [The character of Saeko is reminiscent of Tsukasa Hojo's earlier work, *Cat's Eye*.] Makimura's former partner on the police force, Saeko Nogami now serves as a special investigator, occasionally enlisting the help of City Hunter. Beautiful and strong-willed, Saeko uses her not inconsiderable appeal to manipulate the men around her while her mind sees more intangible results. Of course, she may decide a man isn't worth the trouble and calmly beat him to a pulp. For tougher customers, she keeps a set of razor-sharp throwing knives strapped to her upper thigh.

Saeko

Saeko never actually pays for the services of City Hunter. She usually offers her body in payment--throwing Ryo into complete turmoil. He becomes so eager that he is easy to confuse, and the wily Saeko is usually able to escape with her professional--and self--intact.

Umibozu--"The Falcon"

Umibozu is an ex-military officer of an unknown nation (most likely America). He is currently a free lance assassin often employed by the Yakuza (Japanese mafia).

Umibozu stands an imposing seven feet tall and is never seen without his trademark sunglasses. He's tough, able to force bullets out of his back with his muscles alone, and has survived a building collapsing upon him. He does have one weakness, though: he's terrified of cats, especially kittens.

"The Falcon" (his mercenary code name, based on his real name "Hayato") and Ryo have a "professional" friendship and often join forces on contracts. Like his friend Ryo, Umibozu holds a special fondness for Saeko Nogami, Smith and Wesson, and Wild Turkey whiskey.

Umibozu does have a deeper, more sensitive nature. Several years ago, Umibozu served under a man named Himura in a mercenary corps. When a comrade would fall in battle, Himura would play a requiem for

them on his violin. Several years later, with Himura dead and Umibozu the only surviving member of his squad, Umibozu seeks out Maki, Himura's only daughter, now a concert violinist. Umibozu hopes Maki can return the tribute given by Himura to his comrades by playing a requiem for her father.

CITY HUNTER MANGA

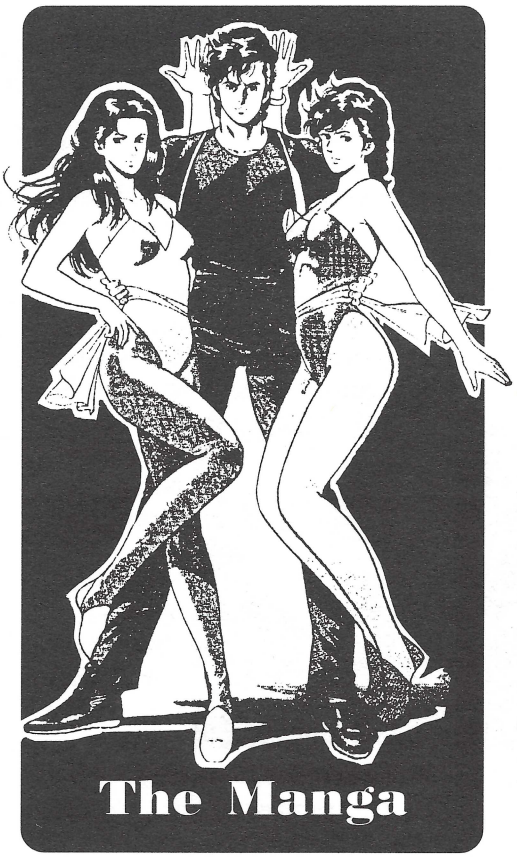
When the time came for *City Hunter* manga to be animated, the decision was made to keep the stories intact, making only minor changes for the sake of censorship. In general, *City Hunter* manga is more violent and sexually explicit than the TV show.

One of the running gags cut from the TV show is the fact that every morning, Ryo wakes up with an erection. When questioned by Kaori, his response is, "Well, it just means that I'm healthy!" In fact, the frequency of *mokkori* jokes in the manga rivals the frequency at which the ten-ton hammers appear in the TV series.

Also cut from the TV show is the character Kyotsu Jiyu, simply known as the Old Man. Kyotsu maintains a secret shooting range and provides Ryo with his weapons and ammunition supplies [note: guns are illegal in Japan except for government personnel].

In the manga, Ryo dates other women. In the TV series, Kaori is always ready with her ten-ton hammer to stamp out Ryo's fires. In the manga, Ryo occasionally accepts a night of passion in payment for his services.

Another difference between the manga and the TV show is that Makimura is not killed by the "General," but by a Yakuza assassin, who was injected with PCB on the General's orders. This in itself may seem trivial, but it reflects the trend in the TV *City Hunter* to move away from the harsh reality of the manga and toward a more comical *Miami Vice*/cops and robbers world expressed on the screen.



The comedic trend is highlighted even more by the recent extension of the TV series into *City Hunter 2*. *City Hunter 2* has lost nearly all semblance of seriousness and consists of a never-ending stream of silliness and 100-ton hammers. The relationship between Ryo and Kaori that was hinted at in the final two episodes of the first series has been shoved to the back of the icebox in *City Hunter 2*, cooled off to the point of nonexistance.

However, in recent episodes the previously declining *City Hunter 2* has been making a compromise come back. In a trend toward two-part episodes, the first episode is usually quite silly while the second episode is deadly serious (reminiscent of early *City Hunter* episodes).

STILL GOING STRONG

City Hunter is alive and *mokkori* healthy. Its ratings have been consistantly high since its introduction. There is even a *City Hunter* movie in the works. The closing theme, "Get Wild" by TM Network, has placed on the top ten animation music charts and was recently voted the top anime song for 1987 in the recent *Animage* Grand Prix. In addition, the episodes are currently being released on video and the manga is still selling out in both Japan and the United States.

City Hunter is one of the best action/comedy/adventure/detective shows to hit the airwaves in years. But be forewarned: *City Hunter* is addictive. If you haven't seen the show before, take a chance, get lucky--you won't be disappointed. If you have seen *City Hunter*, just nod your head and smile. See you at Shinjuku Station.

CHAR'S COUNTER ATTACK

continued from page 19

most emission, knowing that those should be the nuclear warheads, he fires.

Gyunei's gamble pays off. The resulting nuclear explosions destroy all of the missiles in the barrage.

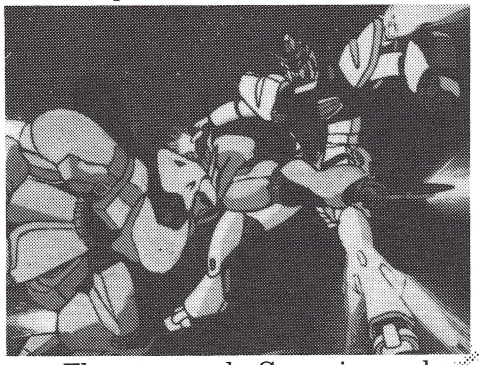
Quess encounters the Sazabi and tells Char that Nanai hit her. "That's not good," he replies. "I'll speak to her." Although she is not wearing a normal suit, she ejects from her Jagd Doga and tumbles into the open cockpit of Sazabi. Char scolds her for not wearing her suit, but Quess simply throws her arms around him and asks if he'll really scold Nanai.

In his Jagd Doga, Gyunei searches for Nu Gundam and engages it in combat only to find that he is greatly overmatched.

On board *Lar Kailum*, Chein helps to man a gunnery station. Lezun is wreaking havoc on the Lond Bell's dummy fleet. "You don't have to be a newtype to know these are fakes." Lezun turns her attentions to the *Lar Kailum*. None of the anti-mobile suit guns on the *Lar Kailum* come even close to hitting her. Suddenly Chein's Psycho-Frame sample begins to glow and she shoots down Lezun with ease.

In the Sazabi, Quess is horrified by all of the destruction around her. On the *Lar Kailum*, Hassaway feels Quess's distress.

Gyunei attacks and disables Kayra's Re-GZ, and Kayra hopes Nu Gundam will appear. When Amuro hesitates to attack, fearing Gyunei will destroy Re-GZ, Kayra foolishly gets out of her suit, telling Amuro not to worry about her. Gyunei grabs Kayra and threatens to crush her if Amuro does not surrender. Amuro complies and drops his gun and two of his fin funnels. Several Geara Dogas then attack the Nu Gundam with "heat serpents," devices that send an electric charge down a fine wire connected to the target. As Amuro screams in pain, the funnels react automatically and destroy the heat serpents.



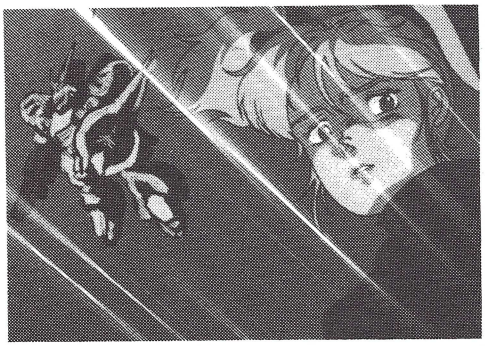
The enraged Gyunei crushes Kayra and throws her free. Nu Gundam's funnels force Gyunei to retreat while an upset Amuro recovers Kayra's body. Amuro returns to *Lar Kailum*.

In the Sazabi, Char remarks upon Quess's amazing sensitivity to the entire battle around her.

On *Lar Kailum*, Astonauge receives news of Kayra's fate. He rushes off in a panic. Amuro tries to stop him from viewing the body, but is unable to do so. "The funnels were adjusted too sensitively," remarks Amuro to Chein. "They acted upon instinct." Astonauge mourns Kayra's death as Amuro continues to reflect upon the tragedy. "Until I stop Char, I cannot die."

Axcis, Space

Nanai informs Char that Alpha Azieru has never been tested, and suggests that Quess be the one to perform the tests, in combat. Char chides Nanai on her meanness to Quess. Nanai advises Char that Gyunei works best when with Quess. "If I put Quess in the Alpha Azieru, we can't have that." Nanai replies that she only follows his orders. Char asks her if that is what she wants.



"If you love me," she says.

"I'd be troubled if you weren't with me." Char buries his face in Nanai's chest. She strokes his hair and says, "Char Aznable, you're tired because you want to be Cassoval Daikun."

"It's hard to bear my father's name," says Char. "I need your support."

Gyunei finds Quess checking the Alpha Azieru and takes her to a deserted section of Axcis to have a talk with her. It is his opinion that she is being used, so he tells her that to Char, she is just like Lalah Sun. Quess slaps Gyunei and goes to find out the truth for herself.

Lond Bell Fleet, Space

A briefing is in progress for the attack on Axcis. The plan is to split Axcis in half with the four remaining nuclear missiles. If that doesn't work, they'll have to go inside to plant explosive charges with junior mobile suits. According to the plan, both halves of Axcis should speed back into space.

"We have to complete this operation before Char's reinforcements arrive from Side 2," instructs Bright seriously. "I'm sorry...but we might not return from this mission."

In her cabin, Chein Agi reads a letter from Oktober Saran. He mentions in the letter that the Nu Gundam's Psycho-Frame technology was given to him by a Neo-Zion officer whom he believes was Char Aznable. She questions this, as she can't believe Char would have given them, the enemy, anything useful. Amuro enters Chein's quarters. They reflect upon the sadness of the situation with Astonauge and Kayra.

"Do you believe in the possibility," says Chein, pointing to the original Psycho-Frame sample, "that this [Psycho-Frame sample] and your Psycho-Frame will respond to each other and cause unexpected phenomenon?"

"Oktober's story?" asks Amuro. "I don't think so. I can beat Char with the fin funnels." He kisses her. "I designed it [the Nu Gundam], and you maintain it."

Outside Hong Kong, Earth

Mirai and Chieming are entangled in a massive traffic jam. They happen to glance upwards and see Axcis appearing in the skies above them. In a frightened voice Mirai asks, "Is that Char's asteroid?"

Near Axcis, Space

On the *Lar Kailum*, Amuro prepares to launch. Chein prays for his quick return. In the meantime, Melan tells Hassaway, "I can't let you onto the battle bridge, but if you think you can, you can stay on the main bridge." He then asks Hassaway to prepare a will. The crew of the bridge wonder if the other Federation ships in the vicinity will assist them.

***Reurula*, Axcis**

Quess confronts Char, "Am I the replacement for Lalah Sun?" Char quickly removes her from the bridge and overhearing ears. In the hall, he asks her where she heard that.

"I love you! I would die for you!" she cries.

"Then I will forget about Nanai and Lalah," responds Char. Throwing her arms around Char, she says, "Then I will protect you with the Alpha Azieru."

***Lar Kailum*, Enroute to Axcis**

Melan compliments Hassaway on his will, saying he even remembered his father. Heading toward the battle bridge, Bright Noah says to Hassaway, "If you get scared, go ahead and go into the back."

"Yes, Father."

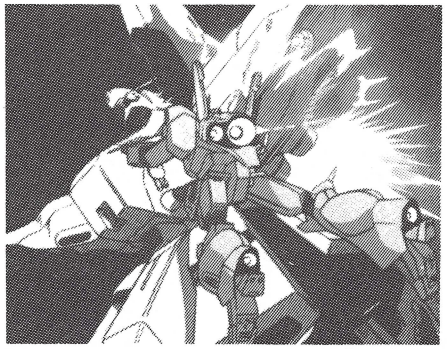
Axcis, Enroute to Earth

Char finds Gyunei on his way to his mobile suit and asks that he protect Quess. He also lets Gyunei know that if he has any interest in Quess, he [Char] will not stand in his way. All he is interested in, says Char, is the recreation of the Jion empire and the destruction of Amuro Rey.

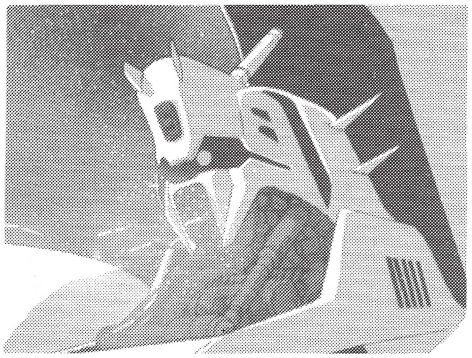
Battleground, Axcis

Alpha Azieru launches with Gyunei providing an escort in his Jagd Doga. The giant Alpha Azieru repels a missile attack with careless ease. Gyunei cautions Quess not to get cocky around Nu Gundam.

Quess engages Nu Gundam in combat. She is stunned to see how effortlessly Amuro is able to destroy her funnels as well as dodge the Psychommu Vulcan guns. Quess cannot believe the power of the Nu Gundam. Gyunei attacks as well, but he cannot cope with Nu Gundam either. Fortunately for Gyunei and Quess, a squadron of Geara Dogas arrive.



With numbers against him, Amuro deploys all of his funnels and forms an almost-impregnable, pyramid-shaped beam defense barrier.



Only a full blast of Psychommu energy from the Alpha Azieru can penetrate Nu Gundam's barrier. Amuro sees his chance to fire at Alpha Azieru while its main gun is recharging, and destroys the giant mobile armor's head cannons.

Back on *Lar Kailum*, Hassaway again senses Quess's distress. Chein decides to find Amuro and give him the Psycho-Frame sample, feeling that the extra bit of alloy might give Amuro the edge he needs to defeat Char. Astonauge tries to stop Chein from taking the damaged Re-GZ, and is killed when stray fire hits the *Lar Kailum*'s mobile suit deck. Hassaway Noah makes his way to the mobile suit deck where he steals an RGM-89 Jegan and after a shaky start, goes off in search of Quess.

Quess and Gyunei continue to fight against Amuro Rey. Despite Gyunei's considerable combat skills, he makes a fatal mistake. Amuro drops the Nu Gundam's shield and Hyper Bazooka. Gyunei pauses to wonder why and Amuro shoots him while he is distracted.

During this time Bright Noah launches another missile attack on Axcis, but once again, Char is able to repel the attack.

Hassaway confronts Quess, telling her to stop attacking. Panicked, Quess reacts by pointing her gun at him. Chein interceeds, warning Hassaway of his danger. Quess redirects her gun at Chein and fires, but the Psycho-Frame sample creates a beam barrier to protect the Re-GZ. Chein fires on the Alpha Azieru but is blocked when Hassaway uses the Alpha Azieru guns to destroy the Re-GZ's incoming missiles. Hassaway begs Quess to stop, telling her that this is how she continues to make enemies.

"How can you say that? It's because of people like you that the Earth has to be destroyed." Quess is surprised to see Hassaway open the cockpit and move toward her.

"Quess! I know you're there! Open up the hatch, you can leave all this behind!" Quess accuses Hassaway of being a child and knocks him back to his mobile suit.

Quess turns to Chein and says, "Nasty woman! If it weren't for you, I could have stayed with Amuro." Chein finally realizes who is in the Alpha Azieru. She fires a missile at Quess to save Hassaway.

Quess realizes that the missile is headed for Hassaway, pushes the Jegan out of the way and moves into the missile's path to save him. Hassaway is distraught at her death.

"Chein!" he yells. "You didn't have to kill her!" Reacting on pure emotion, Hassaway fires on Chein, destroying the Re-GZ and Chein Agi with it. With Chein's death, the Psycho-Frame sample releases a fantastic amount of newtype energy that emits light that is seen both in space and from Earth.

Axcis, Enroute to Earth

The Lond Bell junior mobile suit team, led by Bright Noah, boards Axcis and plants their demolition charges. Amuro and Char confront each other and renew their old conflict outside of Axcis. During the fighting, Amuro notices a cruiser docked at Axcis that is being loaded with nuclear weapons. Finally, Char's plan has become evident to Amuro.

Amuro angrily fires upon the cruiser. The resulting blast destroys several more cruisers and damages Nanai's ship. Char and Amuro again clash, first with beam rifles, then with their funnels. Finally they are left with only beam sabers. Char becomes distracted by the retreating *Lar Kailum* and temporarily loses sight of Amuro. He is able to recover just in time to see Amuro enter Axcis without benefit of his mobile suit. Char also leaves his suit and enters Axcis.

Amuro and Char take turns at stalking each other, using bazookas as their primary weapons. After neither is able to gain an advantage, the two men return to their respective mobile suits and the battle is renewed on a grander scale. Amuro Rey and Char Aznable are oblivious to anyone but each other in this duel to end everything.

Neither the Nu Gundam nor the Sazabi are left with weapons, so the fight becomes hand-to-hand. The power of the Nu Gundam and the anger of Amuro Rey becomes evident as Amuro causes severe damage to the Sazabi and dislodges Char's linear seat into space. Just as Amuro grabs Char's linear seat, the charges inside Axcis explode, splitting the huge asteroid in two. Hassaway Noah screams, thinking that his father is still inside of Axcis. Char begins a mocking laugh, telling Amuro that the explosion was too big and that the second half is *still* headed toward Earth.

Char says, "I've won! I miscalculated; it's still headed for Earth. You've overdone it." Amuro replies that it's only one stone and that Gundam alone can stop it.

"Stop this foolish act!" commands Char.

"You never know until you try."

"Are you serious?"

"If you hadn't hurried so much...I haven't given up on mankind yet." As the forward section of Axcis enters the atmosphere, Amuro jams Char's linear seat into the leading edge of the falling rock.

On board the *Reurula*, Nanai grieves for Char, knowing that no one can survive re-entry unprotected.

As Amuro and Char re-enter Earth's atmosphere, Char reveals that it was he who gave Anaheim the Psycho-Frame technology, and that he only wanted to have a fair fight between the two of them. Amuro criticizes Char for this way of thinking.

Nanai sobs, "The Captain...his life is being drained." Multiple incoming mobile suits are detected by both fleets. It is the Federation forces, the entire reserve of RGM-86R GMIII. Along with the Jegens from Lond Bell, each suit tries to assist Amuro in diverting Axcis from impacting with Earth. Even the last few Geara Dogas join the effort.

Amuro yells to the suits outside to stop, to not join him in this foolish effort. Char does not know what is happening and says to himself, "This was supposed to be a perfect operation."

"Even the Geara Dogas," exclaims Amuro. "Everyone, back off!"

A Geara Doga pilot replies, "Either we save the Earth or we don't...it's worth trying." Amuro protests that the other suits cannot withstand the incredible friction and heat, and will overload. "Please, everyone stop!"

"Sooner or later, this kind of sadness will spread and destroy the Earth. Man must punish mankind to atone for crimes we have committed against nature, against Earth. Amuro...why can't you understand this?"

Amuro orders everyone to get away, exclaiming, "The Gundam's strength is— " A bright green aura begins to emit from Gundam, which repels the other suits from Axcis.

"These vibrations from the Psycho-Frame," says Char. "All the people's wills focused on saving the Earth are causing the Psycho-Frame to overload. But I don't sense any fear. It's more a feeling of warmth and security."

Lar Kailum notices that mobile suits are being repelled on the other side of the light. Bright orders them to keep monitoring.

"I see," continues Char, "but humans who feel this warmth will end up destroying even the Earth. I can understand that, Amuro!"

"I know! That's why I have to show the world this light of our souls."

"For a man who thinks that way, you were awfully cold to Quess."

"I'm not a machine," says Amuro. "I couldn't be a father figure for Quess. Is that why you used her as a tool?"

"So—Quess wanted a father. I gave her what she wanted and used her as I needed."

"A man like you has a small mind." They continue their fiery descent to Earth.

"Lalah Sun could have become my mother. How can you say that, as a man who killed her?"

"Mother? Lalah?" Amuro cries out suddenly as a brilliant flash of green, the light from the Psycho-Frame, illuminates the area.

Nanai calls out for Char. The bridge crew of *Reurula* cry out, "The Axcis is moving away from Earth!"

"That's impossible!"

Neither Amuro nor Char can be seen, only the sparkling Psycho-Frame light.

Aboard *Lar Kailum*, "The course change of Axcis is verified—it's moving away from Earth!" Bright's face is stunned.

A stream of corruscating light follows the original Psycho-Frame sample as it shoots into space. People all over Earth look at the light, and wonder.

Life on Earth goes on.

■

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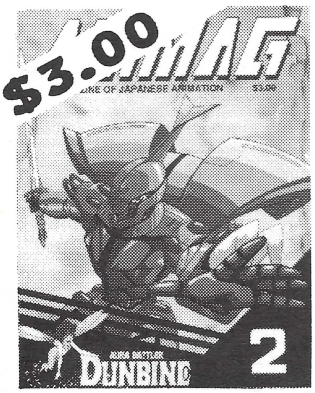

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BACK PAGE COMMENTS

Well, issue five is finally done. Things are going well now that we've joined forces with Pacific Rim Publishing. We're hoping that the next few issues will show a noticeable improvement in both *Animag*'s content and apperance. We look forward to all our reader's continuing support.

Writers Guidelines:

Thinking about submitting and article to *Animag*? We welcome all contributions but before you send us your manuscripts, send for the *Animag Writers' Submission Guidelines.* All requests must be accompanied by a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) and should be marked "Writers' Guidelines".

Letters to the Editor:

Something on your mind? We're hoping to publish a letters page soon-- contingent on letters received! Letters should address a specific issue pertainning to animation or the animation industry. Don't hesitate -- write today!

Animag BBS:

Animag's computer BBS (Bulletin Board System) is in operation and going strong. Takayuki Karahashi is the sysop (systems operator). The BBS was created to be " an extension of the magazine," says Dana Fong, co-sysop, "and will feature news and other items submitted by fans of *Animag*. The system is designed to function as an interface, an electronic bulletin board between *Animag* and our readers. The BBS telephone number is (415) 341-5986. Set your modems for 300/1200 BAUD.

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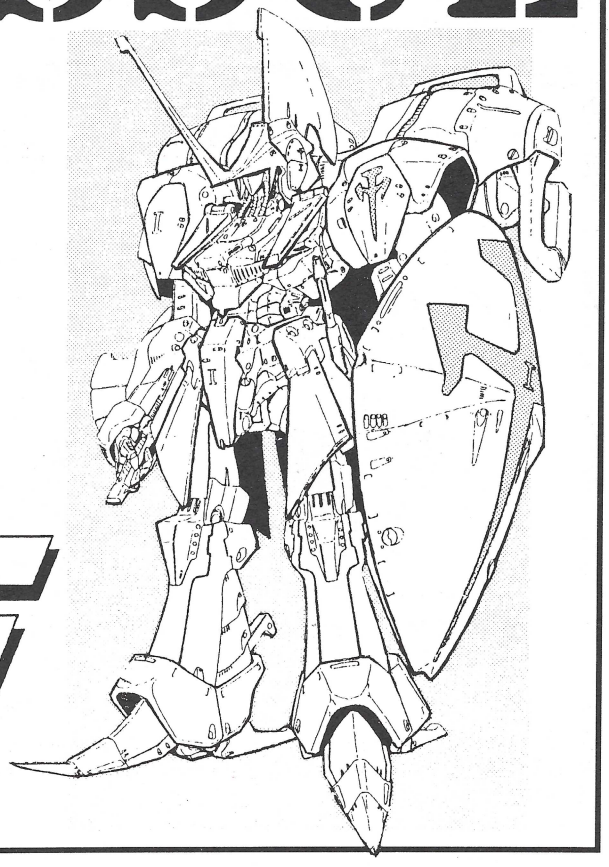

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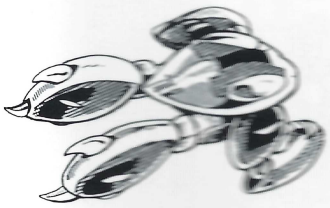

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